Ciara Elizabeth Stewart

Irish women and Political Petitioning, c. 1870-1918

Abstract

Petitioning was one of the few forms of political agitations available to the disenfranchised of the nineteenth century. This thesis studies petitioning patterns in order to re-examine the political experience of Irish women in the period 1870-1918. It addresses the development of a gendered political culture in Ireland and how petitioning allowed women to partially break the boundaries of a male dominated political sphere. Petitioning, alongside other campaign methods, allowed Irish women to become involved in the Irish public and political sphere, despite going against traditional gender and social conventions. This approach allows for an examination of the social and denominational characteristics of Irish women's organisations in this period and this thesis will show that those adopting petitions were run predominantly by middle-class Protestant women. This thesis draws on examples from a variety of women's movements, through case studies of the Irish Ladies' National Association for the Repeal of the Contagious Diseases Acts, (LNA), the Dublin Women's Suffrage Association, (DWSA), their successor the Irish Women's Suffrage and Local Government Association, (IWSLGA), the Dublin Women's Temperance Association, (DWTA), the Irish Women's Franchise League, (IWFL) and the Ulster Women's Unionist Council, (UWUC).

This thesis places Irish women within previously Anglo-centric studies of nineteenth-century suffrage activism by demonstrating the connections that existed between Irish and British women. This thesis shows that there was often co-operation between British and Irish women, but there were cases when these relationships were complicated or fractious. Therefore, each chapter provides a comparative perspective with British women's organisations, as it is vital to acknowledge the ties and differences that existed between Irish and British

activists in order to understand how they could be affected by issues such as Home Rule.

In order to understand the practice of petitioning, this thesis also explores themes of networking, mobilisation, separate spheres, conflicts of morality and popular sovereignty. Overall, this thesis aims to examine how Irish women approached politics in this period through a variety of organisations, each with different aims, but which still multiplied and deepened the politicisation of Irish women.

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Abbreviations

Archives

PRONI	Public Record Office of Northern Ireland
NAI	National Archives of Ireland
NLI	National Library of Ireland

Publications/Resources

BWTJ	British Women's Temperance Journal
SCPP	Select Committee on Public Petitions
WSJ	Women's Suffrage Journal

Organisations

CLWSI	Church League for Women's Suffrage Ireland
BWTA	Belfast Women's Temperance Association
DWSA	Dublin Women's Suffrage Association
DWTA	Dublin Women's Temperance Association
ICWSA	Irish Catholic Women's Suffrage Association
IPP	Irish Parliamentary Party
IWFL	Irish Women's Franchise League
IWRL	Irish Women's Reform League
IWSLGA	Irish Women's Suffrage and Local Government Association
IWSS	Irish Women's Suffrage Society
IWTU	Irish Women's Temperance Union
LLL	Ladies' Land League
LNA	Ladies' National Association for the Repeal of the Contagious Diseases Acts
MWFL	Munster Women's Franchise League
NARCDA	National Association for the Repeal of the Contagious Diseases Acts
NIWSS	Northern Irish Women's Suffrage Society

NMA	National Medical Association
NSWS	National Society for Women's Suffrage
NUWSS	National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies
UUC	Ulster Unionist Council
UWUC	Ulster Women's Unionist Council
WSPU	Women's Social and Political Union
WWCTU	World Women's Christian Temperance Union

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Introduction

Scope and significance

This thesis seeks to re-examine the politicisation of Irish women, which began with earnest in the later nineteenth-century. A long period of time, 1870-1918, was chosen for this study in order to trace patterns of campaigning activism and to focus on a crucial period in the formation of both female and Irish political cultures. Women found ways to enter political spaces across the long nineteenth century, however, it was from 1870 onwards that women began to join and organise their own formal political campaigns. This dissertation will also focus primarily on the campaign method of petitioning. Studies on Irish women's political agency have tended to focus on individuals or organisations, but studying a type of campaigning, such as petitioning, allows for comparison between the different causes and a focus on the practice of how women most commonly participated in politics. These women became increasingly involved in political life and tried to influence both society and politics while navigating the expectations and frustrations of a male polity. This dissertation will show that from the 1870s onwards, varying types of women's organisations were able to exert their influence in politics and create new spaces for women's political participation and activism. Some organisations shared similar aims, such as the attainment of Parliamentary franchise, while other bodies sought to combine moral reform with suffrage agendas.

There were also women who had no concern for the progression of women's rights but still contributed to the overall politicisation of Irish women. All of the organisations examined in this thesis ultimately intensified and developed the role of women in politics and in public life. This dissertation will analyse and compare these groups and their membership to further understand how they were organised and what methods were the most effective in mobilising women for their causes. As has become increasingly apparent,

petitioning was the most common expression and means of political involvement for the disenfranchised and one that allows us to get beyond the leaders who wrote articles or gave speeches. The Representation of the People Act, 1884, went some way to expanding the electorate but was 'far from introducing universal adult male suffrage' and the 'different requirements of rating and residence continued to make it difficult for many to register'.[1] Women were excluded entirely and remained disenfranchised and campaign methods like petitioning were vital for their inclusion in political worlds. Petitioning connected 'parliamentary with popular politics and enabled local activity to be co-ordinated as part of national campaigns.'[2] The right to petition was open to all citizens and the act of signing a petition created a link between the disenfranchised, such as the organisations examined in this thesis, with political and parliamentary processes. Studying this type of campaigning in detail allows us to think about what activity was constituted by activism. A focus on petitioning as a political activity has also determined what organisations would be examined in this thesis.

By studying this particular form of political activity, the thesis reveals similarities in the social and religious composition of the organisations that favoured these campaign methods. This revealed that these organisations were predominantly led by middle-class Protestants. This focus helps to explain and draw out what links these groups together and why some focused on progressing the position of women in society and why some did not but indirectly contribute to the further politicisation of Irish women. This in turn will allow for a better understanding of developments in Irish petitioning culture and its place in women's political history throughout the period. This introductory chapter will, first, critically review the relevant literature and explain the

[1] Brian Mercer Walker, 'The Irish Electorate, 1868-1915', *Irish Historical Studies*, 18:71 (1973), p. 366.
[2] Richard Huzzey and Henry Miller, 'Petitions, Parliament and Political Culture: Petitioning the House of Commons, 1780-1918', *Past & Present*, 248:1 (2020), p. 124.

contribution that this dissertation makes to this field. Second, the introduction will outline the sources and methods used to conduct this research and the frailties and strengths of this source base. Third, the introduction will conclude by providing a brief précis of each chapter and how it contributes to answering the overall argument of the dissertation.

Historiographical review

This section will discuss the main historiographical areas that are central to this thesis. It will first address Irish women's history and how this thesis has contributed to a shift away from the traditional biographical approach to analysing Irish women's political contributions via networking and mobilisation. It will then examine Irish women's history more broadly from numerous perspectives, by addressing how studies on Irish political history tend to focus on Nationalism and leaders such as Charles Stewart Parnell and Daniel O'Connell and how this has gradually changed with the introduction of works on women's history by various historians. This thesis complements their work by placing Irish women within these wider Irish political contexts through their use of petitioning. This section will also address the absence of Catholic women from many leading women's organisations in Ireland during this period and this thesis's contribution to answering why Catholic and Protestant women activists were divided. It will also concentrate on women's organisations who contributed to women's politicisation, despite Franchise not being one of their aims. This will also acknowledge how many of the organisations in this thesis made conservative claims in feminist arguments. It is necessary to then move away from those perspectives on Irish women's history to focus specifically on the concept of separate spheres, as this thesis shows that separate sphere ideology is not an effective method through which to examine women's gender roles in politics and society. This section will also address the lack of comparative studies on British and Irish history and how this thesis has achieved this by combining

the interactions and experiences of British and Irish women's organisations. The final part of this section will then examine the history of petitioning and the vital role it plays in studies on Irish women's political history.

Studies of women's history have generated a vast genre on recovering leading activists' lives. Writing in 1996, Maria Luddy also found that the historiography of women's history was still in the early stages and that in Ireland 'for the most part, recent scholarship in women's history has taken the form of biographies.'[3] This trend continued with the publication of biographical studies on leading women in Irish history, such as twentieth-century activists Hannah Sheehy Skeffington, Maud Gonne or Countess Markievicz.[4] Biographical studies of nineteenth-century figures have focused primarily on Anna Haslam, Isabella Tod and Anna Parnell.[5] This has resulted in producing a rich array of newfound information on the role of women in Irish political life. While these focused primarily on women who were well known in their organisations, they also provided important background information on their respective organisations and how they contributed to Irish politics. For example, Carmel Quinlan's work on the Haslams has expanded our knowledge greatly on the work of the Dublin Women's Suffrage Association and the Irish Women's Suffrage and Local Government Association.[6] While her work focuses primarily on the contributions of the Haslams, it still provides ground-breaking information on the work of the DWSA/IWSLGA and their contributions to the early Irish women's suffrage movement. Yet a biographical focus also has it limits in terms of understanding the broader contours and development of Irish women's political activism

[3] Maria Luddy, 'Writing the History of Irish Women', *Gender & History*, 8:3 (1996), p. 467.
[4] Anne Haverty, *Constance Markievicz: Irish Revolutionary* (Dublin, 2016); Margaret Ward, *Hannah Sheehy Skeffington: a life* (Cork, 1997); Margaret Ward, *Maud Gonne: a life* (London, 1993).
[5] Mary Cullen and Maria Luddy, (eds.), *Women, Power and Consciousness in 19th Century Ireland: Eight Biographical Studies* (Dublin, 1995).
[6] Carmel Quinlan, *Genteel Revolutionaries: Anne and Thomas Haslam and the Irish Women's Movement* (Cork, 2005).

beyond key individuals. For instance, chapter two of this thesis will expand on Quinlan's work by looking beyond the Haslams and, for the first time, will analyse their reliance on petitioning as a form of peaceful agitation. This dissertation differs from biographical studies through its focus on organisations, collective action and the most popular form of political practice in the nineteenth century, thereby revealing not only lesser-known activists and participants, but also the new and varying campaign strategies that were deployed. In total, this provides a comparative perspective, helping to show what methods and practices were most effective in politicising Irish women.

For a long time, women's political contributions have largely been ignored in the vast historiography of Irish politics. Writing in 1992, Margaret McCurtain and Mary O'Dowd argued that 'the predominant methodology of Irish historiography, is not only unsympathetic to incorporating the history of women, but by its very nature excludes women.'[7] Later in 1996, Maria Luddy also found that 'political historians pay scant attention to the role of women in political life, seeing it as either peripheral, or of small consequence.'[8] Traditional works on social and political history frequently privileged a Nationalist dynamic, which had never been particularly interested in women. Many of the classic surveys of national reckoning and independence go from Wolf Tone to Free State without attention to the contributions of women. Seminal works by historians such as F.S.L Lyons, Roy Foster and George D. Boyce largely ignore the role of women in Irish politics and their contributions are obscured in favour of the work of Irish men, particularly male leaders, such as Daniel O'Connell or Charles Stewart

[7] Margaret MacCurtain, Mary O'Dowd and Maria Luddy, 'An Agenda for Women's History in Ireland' *Irish Historical Studies*, 28:109 (1992), p. 4.

[8] Maria Luddy, 'Women and Politics in Nineteenth-Century Ireland', in Maryann Gialanella Valiulis and Mary O'Dowd, (eds.), *Women and Irish History: Essays in Honour of Margaret MacCurtain* (Dublin, 1997), p. 89.

Parnell.[9] Women tend to only appear in these accounts as supporters but this thesis seeks to recover their grassroot activities on their own terms.

Contributions by scholars of women's history, such as Maria Luddy, Rosemary Cullen Owens, Mary Cullen and Mary O'Dowd have provided vital and much needed perspectives on the role of women in suffrage and Irish political life.[10] Owens's work contributed notably to current literature by combining women's social and political issues to weave an analysis of the implications of legislative change on women within a wider social context, highlighting issues such as education, labour, and housing rights. This provided vital chronological guidance to this thesis and a deeper understanding of what inspired women to break boundaries and become political in the nineteenth-century. Mary O'Dowd's work covers an earlier period and is one of few expansive works on the contributions of eighteenth-century political women. Eighteenth-century women had sought to enact their influence on politics through their status by attending social engagements which allowed them 'to hear political gossip that might prove useful to their families' political involvement.'[11] Mary O'Dowd has found that Irish women of the eighteenth century were in fact involved and engaged with 'political discourse in eighteenth-century Ireland more than at any time previously', though there were limits to their involvement and their engagement was more passive rather than active.[12] Within the broader social and political history of Irish women documented by these works, this thesis provides a sharper, tighter focus on a key period of political change. It complements the work of Maria Luddy, whose work

[9] F.S.L. Lyons, *Ireland Since the Famine* (London, 1985); George D. Boyce, *Nineteenth Century Ireland: The* Search *for Stability* (Revised Edition, Dublin, 2005); Roy Foster, *Modern Ireland, 1600-1972* (London, 1988).
[10] Rosemary Cullen Owens, *A Social History of Women in Ireland 1870-1970* (Dublin, 2005); Maria Luddy, *Women in Ireland, 1800-1918: A Documentary History* (Cork, 1995); Mary O'Dowd, *A History of Women in Ireland, 1500-1800 (*Harlow, 2005).
[11] O'Dowd, *A History of Women in Ireland*, p. 47.
[12] Ibid, p. 53.

on Irish women and prostitution includes a discussion of the movement to repeal the Contagious Diseases Acts.[13] However, this thesis extends this analysis to a range of different women's organisations with differing aims to explore what these collectively meant for the broader development of Irish women's political identities.

This thesis establishes that the majority of dedicated women's organisations in this period were predominantly Protestant and middle class and that Catholic women were largely absent from these movements. However, this presents a puzzle, given Catholic women were involved in other forms of activism before 1870 and during the period examined in this thesis. Mary O'Dowd has found, despite a lack of scholarly attention on the topic, that Catholic women were politicised earlier in 1823 through their involvement in Daniel O'Connell's Catholic Association on a large scale, up until the collapse of O'Connell's repeal movement in the 1840s.[14] This movement's principal form of campaigning was petitioning Parliament.[15] Notably, these women were accepted on the assumption they would be well suited to taking over the philanthropic character of the movement by acting as fundraisers.[16] Similarly, Catholic Nationalist women could join the Ladies Committee of the Irish Republican Brotherhood, formed in 1865 in support of the Fenian movement. The committee's primary purpose was to raise money for Fenian prisoners and families, but according to Rose Novak, 'women also worked covertly on behalf of the IRB.'[17] As O'Dowd has identified, philanthropic work, like fundraising, in the

[13] Maria Luddy, *Prostitution and Irish Society, 1800-1940* (Cambridge, 2007).
[14] Mary O'Dowd, 'O'Connell and the lady patriots: Women and O'Connellite politics, 1823-45' in Allan Blackstock and Eoin Magennis, (eds.), *Politics and Political Culture in Britain and Ireland, 1750-1850* (Belfast, 2007), pp. 283-304
[15] J.H. Whyte, 'Daniel O'Connell and the Repeal Party' *Irish Historical Studies,* 11:44 (September, 1959), p. 314
[16] O'Dowd, 'Women and O'Connellite politics', p. 483.
[17] Rose Novak, 'Keepers of Important Secrets: The Ladies' Committee of the IRB', *History Ireland,* 16:6 (2008), pp. 28-29.

early nineteenth century 'offered Catholic lay women a means through which they could participate in public life.'[18] For these women, there was a clear link between philanthropy and politics, as they could insert themselves into political organisations by overseeing fundraising work, on the basis of their moral superiority over men. Themes of philanthropy versus political reform are examined in chapter four, which addresses how in the later nineteenth century, Catholic nuns dominated charitable and philanthropic institutions, while lay Catholic women worked from the side-lines. This stifled potential opportunities for Catholic women to take on leadership roles in an organisation. This differed to Protestant middle-class women, who organised more long-lasting organisations, such as the Dublin Women's Temperance Association. This examination will offer some explanation as to the absence of Catholic women in the temperance movement of the later nineteenth century.

Although Catholic women were not afforded a formal position in the aforementioned organisations, new opportunities opened up in 1881 with the formation of the Irish Nationalist Ladies Land League (LLL). While earlier Nationalist organisations offered women a role in philanthropic work, the LLL presented women with a more direct role in Irish land politics. This organisation has been examined most extensively by Margaret Ward and Jane McL. Côté, who have established the LLL's vital contributions to Irish Nationalism and to women's developing role in politics.[19] The LLL focused primarily on peasant proprietorship, it was not described as a feminist movement, however, it played a notable role in bringing women into the public sphere. The LLL was founded as an auxiliary to the Land League in 1881 following the imprisonment of male leaders under the Coercion Act, with Anna Parnell, sister of Charles Stewart Parnell, as its organiser. Between 1881 and 1882, they took on the relief and

[18] O'Dowd, 'Women and O'Connellite Politics', p. 489.
[19] Jane McL. Côté, *Fanny and Anna Parnell: Ireland's Patriot Sisters* (London, 1991); Margaret Ward, *Unmanageable revolutionaries: women and Irish Nationalism* (London, 1995).

secretarial work of the movement but they were able to push the boundaries of philanthropy to step briefly into the public sphere of Irish land politics in the absence of men. This resulted in the mass organisation of women in Irish land politics and the LLL contributed significantly to the politicisation of Irish women as the organisation partook in activities deemed unsuitable for middle class women.[20] Through the LLL, Catholic women were able to gain experience in direct action politics as members organised public mass meetings, were present at tenant evictions, and some members were also under police surveillance and arrested for their activities.[21] The LLL was vital for the politicisation of Irish Catholic women in this period, up until the organisation disbanded in 1882. Notably, the LLL did not partake in petitioning, which is why it has not been included in this study. This is reflective of the fact that most Nationalist organisations in Ireland increasingly viewed Parliament as illegitimate and so would not partake in constitutional methods of protest. The LLL will act, in chapter 2, as an example of the importance of familial connections within women's movements and to show the continuity of personnel between different women's organisations of this period.

Catholic women's involvement in nineteenth century Irish Nationalist organisations demonstrates how Irish Nationalism afforded Catholic women opportunities to work and gain skills necessary for their involvement in all facets of public life, similar opportunities that were also offered in Protestant women's organisations. Catholic women were clearly politicised in this period but not on the issues and through the methods of most of the organisations examined in this thesis. This thesis will therefore question why Catholic women were absent from these organisations and why Catholic women's politicisation did not flourish during this period, despite their involvement in other Nationalist organisations.

[20] Roy Foster, *Charles Stewart Parnell: The Man and his Family* (Sussex, 1976), p. 267.
[21] Côté, *Fanny and Anna Parnell,* p. 207.

It will examine how religious and political and class differences played a role in this divide.

In the early twentieth century, political opportunities for Irish Catholic women expanded with the formation of the Irish Women's Franchise League (IWFL), which is examined in chapter 3. This was a suffrage organisation, with Nationalist sympathies, and is the only organisation in this thesis to feature a predominant Catholic membership. In addition to the IWFL, other Irish Nationalist women's organisations such as Cumann na mBan and Inghinidhe na hÉireann, offered Catholic women a space in Irish politics. Scholarly attention in Irish women's history has tended to focus more specifically on the role of women in twentieth-century Irish Nationalism, with Margaret Ward contributing predominantly to this and, more recently, Senia Pašeta.[22] Pašeta's work explored the experiences of politically active Nationalist and feminist women, adopting a methodology that the history of feminism must be understood in the context of Ireland's history of political change. This thesis has also attempted to do this by combining a focus on both women's suffrage organisations with other political campaigns in order to draw comparisons between different political activist women of this period. It attempts to place all these women into wider historical narratives of political change and growing democracy in Britain and Ireland. Margaret Ward was also the first to address the relationship between Irish and British suffragettes within the wider and complicated context of Nationalism and Home Rule.[23] Chapter three of this thesis expands on Ward's work but with a focus on petitioning patterns and debates during the Home Rule period. Additionally, this thesis addresses how the introduction of Home Rule Bills in

[22] Ward, *Unmanageable revolutionaries*; Senia Pašeta, *Irish Nationalist Women, 1900-1918* (Cambridge, 2013).
[23] Margaret Ward, 'Conflicting Interests: The British and Irish Suffrage Movements', *Feminist Review,* 50 (1995), pp. 127-147.

1886, 1893 and 1912, became an added difficulty for the suffrage movement, as it tended to dominate political discussions.

Diane Urquhart has argued that Unionist women have been largely ignored not only by historians of Unionism and early twentieth-century Ireland, but also by historians of women.[24] Chapter 5 of this thesis addresses this neglect by exploring the key role of Unionist women in resisting Home Rule before 1914 through an analysis of the Women's Declaration and the mass mobilisation of these women, which has often been mentioned by scholars but rarely analysed in depth. It should not be assumed that the fight for suffrage was the main contributory factor to Irish women's growing independence and politicisation in the long nineteenth century. Unionist women, for example, whose main goal was to support the Ulster Unionist Council and to protest the introduction of Home Rule, broke ground in female participation in politics. It was the largest women's organisation in Ireland with 40,000-50,000 members throughout Ulster by 1912.[25] Many women gained valuable insights into the world of politics and it in turn proved that women could organise and run a movement by themselves. Therefore, when studying the politicisation of women, it is vital to also consider the work of organisations whose aims did not include advancing the cause of women, but which they still contributed to indirectly. Chapters 1, 4 and 6 of this thesis will do this by looking at the Ulster Women's Unionist Council (UWUC) and also moral reform organisations such as the Irish Ladies' National Association for the Repeal of the Contagious Diseases Acts (LNA) and the Dublin Women's Temperance Association (DWTA), whose focus was split between

[24] Diane Urquhart and Maria Luddy, (eds.), *The Minutes of the Ulster Women's Unionist Council and Executive Committee, 1911-40* (Dublin,2001), p. xi. See also Janice Holmes and Diane Urquhart, (eds.), *Coming into the Light: The Work, Politics, and Religion of Women in Ulster, 1840-1940* (Belfast, 1994); Diane Urquhart, *Women in Ulster Politics 1890-1940* (Dublin, 2000).
[25] Diane Urquhart, *Women in Ulster Politics*, p. 61.

reforming societal morals and on protecting the position of women within society.

In fact, some of the organisations examined in this thesis utilised a form of 'conservative feminism' as women's authority in politics was staked on conservative notions about their expertise on health care, philanthropy and religiosity. In her examination of conservative feminism through Hannah More, the English writer and philanthropist, Harriet Guest argues that 'a kind of conservatism could work to empower women, to improve their social conditions' and progress their inclusion in the public sphere through strategies of moral reform and philanthropy.[26] The LNA in chapter 1, for example, combined moral and feminist aims by promoting 'one standard of sexual morality, for both men and women'.[27] The LNA did not approve of prostitution, viewing it as immoral, but it also did not approve of forced medical examinations on women who seemed to be punished solely for the crime while men were deemed innocent. The DWTA in chapter 4, however, focused primarily on eradicating alcoholism, viewing it as a temporal sin, and were motivated by conserving polite, respectable societies by influencing social and moral reform. They did not promote any feminist aims, but many suffrage activists such as Anna Haslam, Isabella Tod and Hannah Wigham, were involved in the temperance movement. This showed the duality of aims of many female activists of this period, who were involved not just in suffrage but in other socio-political organisations. Suffrage and temperance activists also shared similar conservative views on women's innate ability to promote positive changes in society and politics due to their expertise in influencing good and moral behaviour within the household.

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[26] Harriet Guest, 'Hannah More and Conservative Feminism' in Jennie Batchelor and Cora Kaplan, (eds.), *British Women's Writing in the Long Eighteenth Century: Authorship, Politics and History* (London, 2005), p. 158.

[27] Maria Luddy, 'Women and the Contagious Diseases Acts, 1864-1886', *History Ireland*, 1:1 (1993), pp. 32-34.

Even the suffrage organisations examined in this thesis relied on conservative arguments to defend their involvement in political spheres. In chapter 2, the DWSA and later the IWSLGA, utilised maternalist and gendered rhetoric to pursue Municipal Franchise and argue for the inclusion of women as Poor Law Guardians. Their members claimed that middle-class women already had experience managing a large household and therefore would be best suited to undertake the day to day running of a workhouse as a Poor Law Guardian. This local activism on part of the DWSA/IWSLGA focused on giving social authority to middle-class women householders, rather than working-class women and sought parliamentary franchise on the same terms as men, rather than franchise for all regardless of class. Similarly, Philippa Levine has found that British suffragists, such as Millicent Garett Fawcett, accepted that 'voting was by no means an inalienable right but one granted only to those whose proof of good citizenship could be weighted by the contents of their purse of the amount of their property.'[28] Barbara Caine also argues that some conservative feminists, such as Emily Davies, were only prepared to campaign for the enfranchisement of 'single women of means.'[29] Chapter 2 examines how the DWSA campaigned primarily for women householders, by organising petitions signed specifically by women of this class.

It is evident that the historiography of studies on Irish women has expanded significantly in recent years. Current literature has progressed to a point that Sarah Richardson believes that the question about whether women were able to engage in politics in the nineteenth century is no longer viable; the debate has now moved on with 'most historians now acknowledging some level of female activism' and instead we must now question what was 'the nature and

[28] Philippa Levine, *Victorian Feminism, 1850-1900* (London, 1987), p. 60
[29] Barbara Caine, *Victorian Feminists* (Oxford, 1992), p. 85.

extent of their political worlds?'[30] Richardson's findings here are in relation to British women but they should also be applied to Irish activists as this is a question that is central to this dissertation. In the case of Ireland, Maria Luddy has found that Irish society 'reinforced traditional gender roles' and that 'women's greatest role was to care for children'.[31] Clearly, Victorian ideas of middle-class women categorised them as caregivers and nurturers. This did, in some ways, hinder women's ability to obtain political power via parliamentary franchise. However, rather than rejecting these stereotypes, women actually utilised traditional ideals of their moral superiority to campaign on various political issues and thus expanded their political worlds. This dissertation will not only examine how these women were politicised but also to what extent they were able to enact influence and change, even if change was only subtle.

This thesis's examination of Irish women's role in politics further complicates existing debates over the utility of separate spheres as a concept to understand women's history. An Irish perspective provides a new way to look at this question. For a long time, the position of women in Victorian Britain was interpreted through a framework that was dominated by the concept of separate spheres. As Amanda Vickery noted in a famous critique, phrases such as '"public and private", "separate spheres" and "domesticity"' were recurring terms in the literature.[32] Briefly, the idea of separate spheres is that a gendered ideology emerged in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century that restricted women, especially middle-class women, to the private or domestic sphere, while men combined a patriarchal role in the domestic sphere, as fathers and husbands, with access to the public sphere of work, politics and civil society. The seminal work of Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall's *Family Fortunes* argued that the

[30] Sarah Richardson, *The Political Worlds of Women: Gender and Politics in Nineteenth Century Britain* (London, 2013), p. 1.
[31] Luddy, 'Women and Politics', p. 101.
[32] Amanda Vickery, 'Golden age to separate spheres? A review of the categories and chronology of English women's history,' *Historical Journal* 36:2 (1993), p. 383.

public sphere was constantly 'organised in gendered ways and had little space for women' and that middle-class feminists of the later nineteenth century 'focused many of their efforts on attempting to conquer the bastions of the public world, a world which had been created by their fathers and grandfathers.'[33] The separate spheres framework developed by Davidoff and Hall has been influential in the study of nineteenth-century gender history. For example, Jane Rendall, has written that separate sphere ideology and 'dichotomies between private and public' were 'fundamental to charting the limitations and oppression of women's lives.'[34] However the dominance of a gendered ideology of separate spheres did not always mean that women were confined to the private sphere in practice and there were many ways in which women crossed the gendered boundaries of public and private, such as women's attendance at public lectures and meetings. The organisations examined in this thesis often crossed these lines by having both public and private meetings and women were afforded the opportunity to prepare speeches and speak during these gatherings.

Other scholars have increasingly questioned the value of separate spheres as a conceptual device.[35] While separate spheres was fruitful for initiating debates about gender history, Vickery concluded that in order to 'map the breadth and boundaries of female experience, new categories and concepts must be generated'.[36] Recent literature, like Kathryn Gleadle's *Borderline Citizens*, has suggested that the idea that the private was the preserve of women and that the public realm was masculine territory, is too sweeping and a poor guide to women's lived experience. Gleadle has acknowledged the 'porosity' of the two spheres and suggests that 'in measuring the impact of restrictive boundaries we

[33] Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle-Class, 1780-1850* (Chicago, 1987), p. 416.
[34] Jane Rendall, 'Women and the Public Sphere', *Gender and History* 11:3 (1999), p. 479.
[35] Vickery, 'Golden Age to Separate Spheres?', p. 413.
[36] Ibid.

need to consider … the ease with which they might be transgressed.'[37] Even more recently, Simon Morgan and Susie Steinbach, through historiographical reviews, have highlighted the importance of surveys of recent scholarship and further emphasised the importance of 'using micro-histories to explore the construction of individual subjectivities or power relations within the family, household, or local community.' [38] Reflections on the work and arguments of these aforementioned historians in order to come to their own conclusions about the validity of separate spheres ideology, have demonstrated the 'inseparability' of the public and private realms 'both in terms of discourse and lived experience'.[39]

While separate spheres ideology may have been pervasive in a mostly male-authored culture, it is not always an effective tool to examine women's lived experience, especially in explaining interactions with and activism in the public sphere. Yet it is important to note that the gendered limitations that women faced in this period were not merely rhetorical or based on social and cultural norms, but were also very linked to legal and political exclusions. Most obviously between 1832 and 1918 women were legally excluded from voting in parliamentary elections, while the doctrine of coverture meant that for much of this period married women had no independent legal identity separate from their husbands, with important implications for the custody of children and property ownership. Within these contexts, this thesis demonstrates the political agency of Irish women, in particular how they utilised the philosophy of separate spheres and mobilised it to extend their activity in public life, and public political life especially. By focusing on the moral and religious characteristics of certain

[37] Kathryn Gleadle, *Borderline Citizens: Women, Gender, and Political Culture in Britain, 1815-1867* (Oxford, 2009), pp. 61, 63.
[38] Simon Morgan, 'Between Public and Private: Gender, Domesticity, and Authority in the Long Nineteenth Century', *Historical Journal,* 54:4 (2011), p. 1210; Susie Steinbach, 'Can We still Use 'Separate Spheres'? British History 25 Years After Family Fortunes' *History Compass* 10:11 (2012), pp. 826-837.
[39] Ibid.

campaigns – which complemented rather than contradicted the ascribed role for women in the discourse of separate spheres – women were able to justify public activism through what Alex Tyrrell called 'women's mission'.[40]

This thesis offers a comparative UK-wide context through a focus on petitioning that encompasses both Irish and British activists, breaking down the gap that has traditionally existed between the study of Irish and British popular politics, and providing a basis for further scholarship. Between 1801 and 1922 Ireland was part of a legislative union with Great Britain, and part of a UK-wide political culture, much of which was focused on and shaped by a common Parliament. It is vital, therefore, to examine the ties and differences that existed between British and Irish women activists and organisations. Placing Irish women within previously Anglo-centric studies of nineteenth-century politics reveals the connections between these women. This thesis thus extends and provides new perspectives on key studies of the social and political history of British women, such as the works of Lucy Bland, Judith R. Walkowitz and Paul McHugh on sex and vice in Victorian Britain, including the Contagious Diseases Acts and the subsequent campaign to repeal them.[41] In regards to temperance, another social movement which sought to reform and eradicate the vice of Victorian society, Irish and British women's temperance associations have been examined briefly by Elizabeth Malcolm and Lilian Lewis Shiman and most extensively through Megan Smitley's research on the Scottish women's

[40] Alex Tyrrell, '"Women's Mission" and Pressure Group Politics in Britain (1825-60)', *Bulletin of John Rylands University Library*, 63 (1980), pp. 194-230.
[41] Lucy Bland, *Banishing the Beast: English feminism and sexual morality 1885-1914* (London, 1995); Paul McHugh, *Prostitution and Victorian social reform* (London, 1980); Judith R. Walkowitz, *Prostitution and Victorian Society: Women, Class, and the State* (Cambridge, 1980).

temperance movement.[42] Maria Luddy has provided a brief analysis of Irish women and temperance through the leadership of Isabella Tod of the Belfast Women's Temperance Association.[43]

The thesis restores the wider UK-wide dynamics currently missing from analyses of women's activism on either side of the Irish Sea. For example, in the case of women's suffrage, the early British movement has been examined extensively through the work of historians such as Phillipa Levine, Jane Rendall, Susan Kingsley Kent and most recently, Ben Griffin.[44] These works, however, do not just focus on the suffrage movement itself, but also on how women integrated themselves into Victorian political cultures and the impact of the constantly changing dynamics between the genders. The Edwardian suffrage movement has often been studied around biographies of key protagonists and leaders, such as the Pankhurst family, in the works of Martin Pugh and June Purvis, to explore the evolution of the campaign.[45] Pugh and Purvis have also published broader accounts of the suffrage movement, alongside historians such as Laura Nym Mayhall and Sandra Stanley Holton.[46] These works have examined

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[42] Elizabeth Malcolm, *"Ireland Sober, Ireland Free": Drink and Temperance in Nineteenth-century Ireland* (Syracuse, 1986); Lilian Lewis Shiman, *Crusade Against Drink in Victorian England (*New York, 1988); Megan Smitley, ''Inebriates', 'Heathens', Templars and Suffragists: Scotland and imperial feminism c. 1870-1914', *Women's History Review,* 11:3 (2002), pp. 455-480; Smitley, Megan K., '"Woman's Mission: The Temperance and Women's Suffrage Movements in Scotland, c. 1870-1914" (University of Glasgow, PhD thesis, 2002).

[43] Maria Luddy, *Women and Philanthropy in Nineteenth Century Ireland* (Cambridge, 1995).

[44] Ben Griffin, *The politics of gender in Victorian Britain: masculinity, political culture, and the struggle for women's rights* (Cambridge, 2014); Susan Kingsley Kent, *Sex and Suffrage in Britain, 1860-1914* (Princeton, 1990); Phillipa Levine, *Feminist lives in Victorian England: private roles and public commitment* (Oxford, 1990); Jane Rendall, *Equal or different: women's politics, 1800-1914* (Oxford, 1987).

[45] Martin Pugh, *The Pankhursts* (London, 2001); June Purvis, *Christabel Pankhurst: A biography* (New York, 2018);
June Purvis, *Emmeline Pankhurst: A Biography* (London, 2002).

[46] Sandra Stanley Holton, *Feminism and Democracy: Women's Suffrage and Reform Politics in Britain, 1900-1918* (Cambridge, 1986); Sandra Stanley Holton and June Purvis, (eds.), *Votes for Women* (London, 2000); Laura E. Nym Mayhall, *The Militant Suffrage Movement: Citizenship and Resistance in Britain, 1860-1930* (Oxford, 2003); Martin Pugh, *The March of the Women: A Revisionist Analysis of the Campaign for Women's Suffrage, 1866-1914* (Oxford, 2000).

the trajectory of the changes and development of the suffrage movement, as it moved away from constitutionalist methods to adopt more direct and sometimes forceful means of gaining attention from Parliament. This thesis adds a new dimension to this body of literature not only by broadening the focus to include Ireland, but by focusing on the importance of practices such as petitioning, which as Henry Miller has recently shown, provide a new way of understanding the shifting methods and aims of suffrage activists.[47]

Petitioning was of central importance to both British and Irish women activists. This dissertation builds on the Leverhulme Trust-funded research project 'Re-thinking petitions, Parliament and People in the long nineteenth century', of which it was part, as well as the recent AHRC Network on Petitions and Petitioning and a growing body of comparative literature on the history of petitions.[48] The power of petitioning has been an understudied aspect of nineteenth-century Irish history as well as women's history. Yet as recent scholarship has made increasingly clear, the explosion of petitioning marked a watershed in the development of nineteenth-century political agitation, by allowing disenfranchised citizens to influence discussions in Parliament. According to Peter Fraser, the increasing utilisation of petitioning 'reflected a new and more widespread political awareness in the country' and alongside this they 'formed part of, and were powerfully promoted by, a new technique of parliamentary agitation.'[49] Petitioning could assume a great number of forms, whether it be official petitions to Parliament, the crown, local authorities, or informal appeals to landowners, employers and other figures of authority. Petitions could also be individual, non-political and personal. In his examination of popular anti-corn law petitioning, Miller has argued that the scholarly neglect

[47] Henry Miller, 'The British Women's Suffrage Movement and the Practice of Petitioning, 1890-1914', *Historical Journal*, pp. 1-25.
[48] Henry Miller, (ed.), The Transformation of Petitioning in the Long Nineteenth Century, Special issue, *Social Science History,* 43 (2019).
[49] Peter Fraser, 'Public Petitioning and Parliament Before 1832', *History,* 46:158 (1961), p. 200.

of petitioning has been surprising given that it 'constituted one of the most important means of communication between citizens, or "the people", and the state.'[50]

Building on these insights, this thesis demonstrates how women could transgress and transcend the limits on their political activity and examine how petitioning contributed to their campaigns. Petitioning was particularly important to women in the absence of voting rights. As Sarah Richardson has written, female petitioning was a critical part of a 'multiform warfare of political life'. This was because 'the sheer number of signatures some petitions attracted meant that those who had hitherto been excluded from participating in the public sphere found a vehicle to ensure their voices were heard.'[51] This helped encourage groups of women to bond and intervene on mutual causes together and aided in the mobilisation of female political activity. Women, alongside un-propertied men, made particularly innovative use of petitioning to represent opinions to representatives elected without their votes. Petitioning would play a significant role in the campaigns of many women's movements throughout the period. Petitioning connected local activity with national campaigning, and as Richard Huzzey has written of abolitionist petitioning, it was distinguished by its 'cumulative scale and persistence- across decades - both nationally and locally.'[52] As in Huzzey's case study, many of the women's organisations studied in this thesis drew on 'life time' or 'intergenerational' supporters as well as the mobilisation of religious and social networks, as in the case of the LNA or

[50] Henry Miller, 'Popular Petitioning and the Corn Laws, 1833–46' *English Historical Review,* 127:527 (2012), pp. 882-919; Henry Miller, 'Petition! Petition!! Petition!!!: Petitioning and the Organization of Public Opinion in Britain, c. 1780-1850' In Henk te Velde and Maartje Janse (eds.), *Organizing Democracy: Reflections on the Rise of Political Organizations in the Nineteenth Century* (Cham, 2017).
[51] Sarah Richardson, *The Political Worlds of Women,* p. 119.
[52] Richard Huzzey, 'A Microhistory of British Antislavery Petitioning', *Social Science History,* 43:3 (2019), p. 615.

DWSA. Overall, this dissertation will reveal the centrality of petitioning to early women's organisations, as well the later suffrage and Unionist campaigns.

Sources and methodology

This thesis relies on a specific combination of source material. The most important source has been various newspaper archives, including the online Irish and British newspaper archives.[53] Newspaper materials have contributed significantly to the recovery of information on what petitions Irish women were organising throughout the nineteenth century. Unfortunately, petitions sent to Parliament were usually retained and destroyed by those authorities and this has resulted in this thesis utilising newspaper accounts of the meetings, minute books and letters of the activists and organisational ephemera. The thesis utilises data from the Select Committee on Public Petitions (SCPP), but this only recorded petitions received by the House of Commons, not other authorities, and did not record the names of subscribers or, usually, the texts of the original petitions.[54]

To understand the culture of petitioning, the thesis found further evidence on who organised and signed the petitions from papers such as *The Shield, The Irish Citizen,* the *Women's Suffrage Journal* and the *British Women's Temperance Journal.* These papers were accessed via online databases such as the above mentioned Irish and British Newspaper Archives, HeinOnline and Gale Primary Sources.[55] As well as providing an understanding of how women's organisations

[53] British Newspaper Archives, [https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk] [Last Accessed, 30 January, 2020], Irish Newspaper Archives, [https://archive.irishnewsarchive.com/Olive/APA/INA.Edu/Default.aspx#panel=home] [Last Accessed 30 January, 2020].
[54] SCPP data can be accessed on the Pro-quest UK Parliamentary Papers database, [https://parlipapers.proquest.com/parlipapers][Last Accessed, 28 December, 2019.]; Huzzey and Miller, 'Petitions, Parliament and Political Culture:', p. 3.
[55] Gale Primary Sources database, [https://www.gale.com/primary-sources] [Last Accessed, 18 June, 2020]; HeinOnline database, [https://home.heinonline.org/] [Last Accessed, 19 September, 2020].

petitioned, this research method was particularly useful in finding the minutes of meetings of organisations that did not have any surviving minute-books, such as the DWTA. Quite often, particularly with the DWSA, petitions were signed at the end of meetings. Frequently these petitions were only signed by the chairman of the meeting as a representative of the whole committee. In these cases, the petition was submitted and displayed by the SCPP with just one signature, even though it represented many more people. These newspaper reports also indicated which organisations petitioned and which did not, which helped to identify the key women's organisations to select for inclusion in this thesis. These reports often also included signature figures, which was vital in establishing how successful these organisations were in collecting signatures, particularly in comparison to their British counterparts. This allowed for a deeper comparative perspective of the running of British and Irish women's organisations.

These newspaper accounts became increasingly important for chapter 3 of this thesis as suffrage organisations such as the IWFL and the WSPU began to debate the usefulness of petitioning to their aims. This was as a result of the rise of militancy as suffrage campaigners became tired of their repeated failed attempts in obtaining the parliamentary franchise. As petitioning was one of the main methods of constitutional agitation for nineteenth-century movements, it came under scrutiny as women such as IWFL founder Hannah Sheehy Skeffington, questioned whether petitioning was a waste of time or whether it still deserved a place in their campaign methodology. Many articles were published by suffrage campaigners in newspapers and these sources allowed for an in-depth examination of how women actually felt about petitioning and what this meant for the progression of Irish petitioning culture as a whole. Overall, newspaper articles and published committee meetings filled in the gaps that were made through the destruction of original petitions. The press also provided much needed background information on events that directly affected an

organisation's ability to successfully campaign and petition the public. Since press coverage was such a fundamental part of campaigners' purpose in petitioning, this thesis has shown that press traces of this activity do cover a significant proportion of the typical petitioning campaigns.

While published accounts of committee meetings feature heavily in the examination of some organisations, this is not the case for the DWSA/IWSLGA as their minute-books are available online and also in the National Library of Ireland (NLI).[56] These provided a valuable insight into the running of both organisations, particularly in regards to the DWSA as the members relied heavily on petitioning as part of their campaign. Additionally, these minute-books provided a detailed list of petitions submitted to Parliament, which includes details on the groups who sent petitions, where they were sent from and how many signatures were collected. The IWSLGA minute-books are far more detailed, providing yearly information on the organisation's finances and subscribers. There is also another element of the partiality of these sources on part of the personal perspectives of campaigners. This has allowed for a wider examination of the perception or 'performance' of the activists studied in this thesis.

As should already be apparent, most original petitions or subscriptional documents from the period do not survive, which makes it difficult to examine the social and political profiles of signatories to petitions. In the case where there were samples of signatures that survived, such as the Unionist Women's Declaration, record linkage was adopted as a research method. In this case, names were found on one record, such as the Declaration, and linked to other

[56] Irish Women's Suffrage and Local Government Association Annual Reports, 1896-1919. AA18427, National Library of Ireland [NLI]; Minute Book of the Dublin Women's Suffrage Association (DWSA) and the Irish Women's Suffrage and Local Government Association (IWSLGA) (1876–1913). DWSA/1-DWSA/9, National Archives of Ireland [NAI], [https://www.nationalarchives.ie/article/minute-book-dublin-womens-suffrage-association-irish-womens-suffrage-local-government-association-1876-1913/] [Last Accessed, 17 April, 2019].

sources, such as census records. This contributed significantly to developing collective biographies of a group by looking at all members of a committee, finding their name on the British or Irish census and formulating statistics based on their age, education and religious beliefs. This was particularly fundamental for the development of chapter 5. Women's Declaration signatures are available to view online on the Ulster Covenant database developed by the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland (PRONI). Signatories can be found by searching their name, gender or address.[57] The findings from this revealed a great deal on the class backgrounds of signatories and the areas in which they signed.

In order to form a thread of connection between the various groups analysed in this thesis, the method of nominal record linkage was utilised. This involved finding the names of various activists in the source material of one organisation and same name in the materials of an entirely different organisation. Through this it became evident that many members were involved in various different women's organisations in this period. Anna Haslam and Isabella Tod, for example, were both heavily involved in the LNA, the DWSA and the DWTA. This offers wider reflection and further proof to the fact that Protestant Irish women dominated political spaces that were made for women. It also establishes a clear link between moral reform organisations and suffrage. There is also a geographical dimension to this which indicates that these organisations were most active in Belfast, Dublin and Cork, as explored in chapters 1, 2 and 4. This suggests that middle-class activists were more numerous here, possibly as a result of these cities, Dublin and Belfast in particular, being more urbanely developed compared to rural areas across the country.[58] Additionally, Alice Johnson argues that British industrial towns 'and indeed the very concept of the

[57] Ulster Covenant and Women's Declaration, Public Record Office of Northern Ireland [PRONI] database [https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/services/search-ulster-covenant] [Last accessed, 29 December, 2019.]

[58] David Dickson, 'Town and City' in Eugenio F.Biagini and Mary E. Daly, (eds.), *The Cambridge Social History of Modern Ireland* (Cambridge, 2017), pp. 112-127.

"urban" as a social and physical space, were strongly identified with the middle classes from the 1820s onwards.' With cities such as Belfast, being middle-class run and 'middle class in ideology, in identity and in reality.'[59] There is also the added element of whether Protestant communities dominated middle-class networks in these cities. In the case of Dublin, David Dickson has found that it developed a 'heterogeneous religious character' from the eighteenth into the nineteenth century as a result of propertied families, which were 'disproportionately Protestant' being drawn towards 'lucrative' openings in the capital city, such as professions and public office, while 'servants and the great unskilled were overwhelmingly drawn' from Dublin's predominant 'Catholic hinterland'.[60] By 1881, in Dublin, the socio-economic group of Professional and major proprietors was composed of 2% Catholics versus 7% Protestants and in unskilled, domestic service, 26% were Catholics versus 3% of Protestants.[61] Martin Maguire acknowledges that there was a trend of the nineteenth-century Protestant population 'towards an increasingly urban population.'[62]The fact that the main areas of middle-class Protestant women's political activism, as identified in this thesis, were in cities, does suggest that Protestant middle-class communities were drawn to professions and communities in cities, like Belfast, Dublin and Cork.

As this thesis focuses on petitioning and petitioning cultures, it is necessary to address that some organisations have been omitted from the study. These include the aforementioned Nationalist organisations, such as the women of O'Connell's repeal movement and the Ladies' Committee of the IRB, as they are outside the period selected for this study. The LLL has been excluded as they did not seem to have petitioned. The LLL however contributed significantly to

[59] Alice Johnson, *Middle-Class Life in Victorian Belfast* (Liverpool, 2020), p. 8.
[60] Dickson, 'Town and City', p. 120.
[61] Martin Maguire, 'A Socio-Economic Analysis of the Dublin Protestant Working Class, 1870-1926', *Irish Economic and Social History*, 20:1 (1993), p. 37.
[62] Ibid, p. 52.

the progression of the politicisation of Irish women and there is still much more work that needs to be done on analysing the organisation. Despite this, as the LLL did not petition, it does not act as a viable subject for a thesis focusing on petitioning and its uses by various political women's organisations. This is a topic that will be revisited in future projects, particularly as the role of women in nineteenth-century Nationalism is hugely significant to our understanding of, not only women's history, but the broad and complicated history of Irish Nationalist and land politics. It is possible that Catholic women may have signed petitions on behalf of these campaigns, though in the absence of most of the original signatory lists it is impossible to say in what proportion. Therefore, this thesis focuses primarily on organisations whose membership favoured middle-class Protestants predominantly, aside from the predominantly Catholic Nationalist IWFL examined in chapter 3. This in itself is a frailty as this thesis cannot provide a comparative perspective between the political experiences of Catholic and Protestant women.

This also raises the question as to why so many political organisations of nineteenth century were dominated by the Protestant middle-class. This has been difficult to answer as there is no evidence available that offers a direct answer as to why Catholic women did not appear to have joined these organisations, least of all sit on their committees. Perhaps Catholic women were afraid to join organisations such as the LNA due to its members openly discussing sex and vice, which resulted in the disapproval of some clergy members.[63] This, however, does not offer an explanation as to why they also avoided joining the DWSA/IWSLGA or the DWTA. There is no conclusive answer to this, it can so far only be assumed that Catholic women did not wish to join organisations that had been founded and were led by Protestant middle-class women. Chapter 1 of this thesis will also show that there was a notable disparity between the Catholic and

[63] Quinlan, *Genteel Revolutionaries,* p. 93.

Protestant middle-classes. More Protestants were middle-class in comparison to Catholics, which offered Protestant middle-class women more opportunities to become involved in various societies and political organisations. This thesis will look into this further and will offer an explanation as to the divide between women of these religions.

Structure

This dissertation is composed of five chapters with each focusing on a different women's organisation. The first chapter examines women's fight for bodily autonomy and public morality through the campaign of the Ladies' National Association for Repeal of the Contagious Diseases Acts (LNA). Following an outbreak of venereal diseases in military garrisons, the Contagious Diseases Acts were implemented to allow for the forced medical examination of women who were suspected of being prostitutes. The LNA saw this as an attack on the bodily autonomy of women and on the conduction of public social morality due to their perception that the acts encouraged men to avail of prostitution. This chapter demonstrates how petitioning and public meetings were combined to form a formidable political tool which allowed women to voice their dissent against these acts. A notable contribution of this chapter, is its wider examination of the conflict activists experienced as a result of pushing to modernise a woman's place in society, while also holding onto ideals of morality surrounding sex and vice. This chapters shows how women's political activism could be fuelled and inspired by conservative and traditional ideals.

Chapter two examines the early Irish suffrage movement through the Dublin Women's Suffrage Association (DWSA), formed shortly after the LNA in 1876. The DWSA was later renamed as the Irish Women's Suffrage and Local Government Association (IWSLGA) in 1898. This began the first Irish women's campaign which sought the municipal and parliamentary franchise for women in Ireland, their counterparts in England had already obtained the municipal vote in

1869. This chapter questions and then demonstrates the centrality of petitioning to the early suffrage campaign as the DWSA relied heavily on petitioning in order to publicise their campaign and encourage the support of the public. Petitioning allowed these women to become involved in the Irish public and political sphere, despite going against traditional gender and social conventions. This chapter scrutinizes how they did this through their campaign methods and their approach to collecting signatures. In addition to this, it addresses the difficulties women faced throughout the petitioning process itself and what this signified for petitioning culture as a whole. This chapter also expands further on suffrage through an examination of the IWSLGA and the establishment of women Poor Law Guardians in Ireland. Following the passing of Women's Poor Law Guardians (Ireland) Bill in 1896, which allowed women to become Poor Law Guardians, and the attainment of the Local Government vote in 1898, the IWSLGA focused on ensuring that women availed of these newfound privileges. As a result, the IWSLGA was less concerned with parliamentary progress and no longer relied heavily on petitions as their main campaign method. By extending their capabilities and contributing to the running of workhouses and outdoor relief, the IWSLGA hoped to educate women in preparation for their eventual inclusion in parliamentary politics. This chapter analyses the effects of this decision and questions whether it aided or encumbered the progression of Irish women's suffrage. A significant contribution of this chapter, is in its compilation of statistics on the DWSA/IWSLGA's membership, finances and petitioning patterns. This allowed for a deeper examination and understanding of how the organisation was run, how it compared to its British counterparts and how suffrage developed in Ireland in the later nineteenth century.

The third chapter progresses into the twentieth century by re-examining the British and Irish Suffrage Movements through their use of petitioning in the Edwardian period. This chapter re-addresses the campaign methods of the Irish

Women's Franchise League (IWFL) and the Pankhurst-led Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU). These organisations turned to militancy as a way of garnering attention for their campaign, which meant that their attitudes to petitioning also changed. Some suffrage activists began to see petitioning as a useless constitutional tool, yet despite this, they still petitioned on numerous occasions. This chapter tracks how Irish petitioning culture changed at the start of this century and what this meant for the progression of both Irish and British women's suffrage. This chapter also contributes to arguments on how to define militancy versus constitutionalism. By examining the campaign activities of the IWFL and WSPU and how petitions could actually be used in militant ways, this chapter shows that militancy and constitutionalism were not absolute opposites and that the two were interchangeable. This chapter relies on the information uncovered in *The Irish Citizen* and *Votes for Women,* which were the official newspapers of the IWFL and WSPU. Both aid a detailed analysis of the petitions examined in this chapter.

Chapter four focuses on a women's organisation that did not focus directly on women's issues, the Dublin Women's Temperance Association (DWTA), but as a question of moral reform which was associated with 'women's mission'. In order to provide a wider perspective of the contribution of petitioning to Irish women's activism, this chapter looks beyond suffrage. It addresses how women were able to take part in the public sphere through their work on curbing the consumption of alcohol and maintaining morality. The DWTA shows how women utilised traditional gender roles to become involved in the running's of public life. As the protectors of morality, women were deemed most suitable to run the organisation, which allowed them to become involved in issues such as child welfare and education. This contributes further to our understanding of women's sense of moral authority and to ideas of women's traditional roles in Victorian society. This chapter shows how the

DWTA, despite not being a suffrage movement, was able to become politicised through petitioning and public meetings. This chapter relied primarily on the minutes of meetings as recorded in the *British Women's Temperance Journal.*

The fifth and final chapter will conclude the thesis by focusing on the Women's Declaration against Home Rule. This was one of the largest Irish Women's petitions signed with 234,046 signatures. The petition was a response to the third Irish Home Rule bill proposed in 1912, which would have granted Ireland a devolved legislature. Unionists opposed this furiously and this chapter will examine how Irish Unionist women were mobilised to protest against it. A notable contribution of this chapter is in its reconstruction of women's signing experience from newspaper reports and it will address the social composition of those who signed in order to better understand the social depth of petitioning. In addition to this, it aims to find links with contemporary and recent women's campaigns, such as the suffrage movement. This will be done through a study of the signatures found on the digitised Women's Declaration, the online Irish census, and various newspapers accounts. This chapter also looks at earlier Unionist women's petitioning campaigns and how these were organised by women activists who did not have an organised formal structure to co-ordinate their activity before the foundation of the Ulster Women's Unionist Council (UWUC) in 1911.

Chapter one: Campaigning and Petitioning against the Contagious Diseases Acts in Ireland: A New Perspective.

This chapter re-evaluates the effects of the Contagious Diseases (CD) Acts on women's activism, as well as the subsequent effects this had on social and moral reform. From the establishment of the first Act in 1864 and onwards, prostitution was increasingly framed as a 'social evil' that required regulation by the state.[64] These concerns, in particular the spread of venereal disease among soldiers in garrison towns, led to the passing of the CD Acts of 1864, 1866 and 1869, which permitted the forced sanitary inspection of prostitutes in Britain and Ireland within specific places, defined as subjected districts located in Cork, Cobh and the Curragh.[65] From 1869 onwards, the Acts were vigorously opposed across the UK by the National Association for the Repeal of the Contagious Diseases Acts (NARCDA), and its exclusively female arm, the Ladies' National Association for the Repeal of the Contagious Diseases Acts (LNA), led by Josephine Butler. An Irish branch of the LNA was set up in 1870, led by the Dublin-based Anna Haslam. The CD Acts inspired discussions amongst these activists on sex and the double standards between men and women as there was 'an unthinking acceptance of male sexual licence' which 'set the tone for parliamentary discussions of prostitution'.[66] This inequality stimulated the emergence of the repeal campaign and according to Lucy Bland, the 'taboo on speaking about sex' was broken by 'the feminist-inspired campaign'.[67] Hence, while the CD Acts attempted to control women, they also sparked a new chapter in women's political activism across the Britain and Ireland.

The historiography of the CD Acts has focused largely on the British experience of their implementation and the relationship between the repeal

[64] McHugh, *Prostitution and Victorian Social Reform*, p. 17.
[65] Luddy, *Prostitution and Irish Society*, p. 140.
[66] Walkowitz, *Prostitution and Victorian Society*, p. 70.
[67] Bland, *English Feminism and Sexual Morality*, p. xiii.

campaign and attitudes toward class, gender and sexual morality. Yet no accounts have offered a comparative study of the British and Irish organisations even though, as we shall see, they worked closely together. This absence in the literature reflects a wider trend of treating the histories of Irish and British popular politics and indeed women's history as separate, rather than closely entwined. Yet to fully understand the repeal campaign, it is essential to examine what encompasses the Irish and British experience together. A study of petitioning – a practice deployed by the movement across the UK – provides the basis for a comparative analysis of the campaign to repeal the CD Acts.

The most detailed works on the repeal campaigns, by Paul McHugh and Judith R Walkowitz, rely almost exclusively on British sources. Walkowitz examined the CD Acts with a predominant focus on the LNA, its work, and its members by unearthing primary source evidence of the organisation and how they influenced the eventual decision to repeal the CD Acts in 1886.[68] This information highlighted the methods the LNA utilised in their campaign which allowed for a comparison, in this chapter, with Irish experiences of the organisation. McHugh focused primarily on non-feminist agitations.[69] While this chapter focuses mainly on the women's organisation, it also branches outwards to compare their activities to male allies of their cause. Lucy Bland has also investigated the contradictions of English feminists' approach to sexual morality and how the CD Acts and the repeal campaign influenced debates around morality and feminism in women's clubs.[70] This theme will be examined extensively in relation to Ireland throughout the chapter, particularly through considering Elizabeth Addey's views on social reform and prostitution. Additionally, there are a wide array works by Patricia Hollis, Jean L'Esperance, Keith Nield, David Pivar and F.B Smith which address the issues of prostitution,

[68] Walkowitz, *Prostitution and Victorian Society.*
[69] McHugh, *Prostitution and Victorian Social Reform*
[70] Bland, *English Feminism and Sexual Morality,* p. 3.

morality and social reform in Victorian Britain and its subsequent influence on growing feminist debates of the nineteenth century.[71] Yet all of these fail to acknowledge how petitioning formed part of the campaign, as well as the contributions of Irish activists.

Prior work on Irish campaigns against the CD Acts has taken a biographical approach, such as Carmel Quinlan's focus on Thomas and Anna Haslam, a Quaker couple who were avid supporters of women's rights.[72] This chapter will expand on Quinlan's work by looking at the LNA's use of petitioning as a campaign method to recruit and demonstrate broad-based female support. Utilising her work, in conjunction with Walkowitz, provides much needed overlap of the work carried out in the LNA from the perspective of both countries. Maria Luddy has conducted an impressive study on prostitution in Ireland and through this has also analysed attitudes to venereal diseases in nineteenth-century Ireland and the effect the CD Acts had on women. Luddy's perspective on the Irish LNA often acted as a point of debate during the research of this study, by uncovering evidence to debate the veracity of her claims that the organisations were not equals.

What is notable from Quinlan and Luddy's accounts is the lack of comparative analysis with the British movement. This shows that there is a need to contribute to current literature by providing a more detailed account of the Irish LNA, from the perspective of its members, its activities and its utilisation of petitioning and public meetings as a form of political agitation. Current

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[71] Patricia Hollis, 'State Intervention and Moral Reform', in Patricia Hollis, (ed.), *Pressure from Without in Early Victorian England* (London, 1974); Jean L'Esperance, 'The Work of the Ladies' National Association for the Repeal of the Contagious Diseases Acts', *Bulletin of the Society for the Study of Labour History* (1973), pp. 14-16; Keith Nield, (ed.), *Prostitution in the Victorian Age: Debate on the Issues from Nineteenth-Century Critical Journals* (Westmead, 1973); F.B Smith, 'Ethics and Disease in the Later Nineteenth Century: The Contagious Diseases Acts', *Historical Studies* 15 (October, 1971), pp. 118-135.

[72] Carmel Quinlan, *Genteel Revolutionaries*.

literature, such as Quinlan's, does account for the Irish LNA association, but fails to examine the broader mobilisation of women through parliamentary petitions. Quinlan on multiple occasions makes mention of the numbers of petitions presented to Parliament in protest of the Acts, but does not go into further detail. In order to contribute to expanding our understanding of this topic, this study will outline the geographical spread of LNA petitioning across Ireland, by relying on newspaper reports and information from *The Shield*, the movement's official newspaper. It will address the importance of petitions in allowing for the mobilisation of women to become involved in the politics of the CD Acts and exert an influence on decision makers in Parliament. Ultimately, a comparative perspective will be developed to further demonstrate the work done and methods utilised by the LNA in Britain and Ireland. This will widen our knowledge of the LNA's reach throughout the United Kingdom and examine how a growth in women's activity was received in both countries. Additionally, this comparative study will provide a strong model of how Irish and British history can be integrated in this period.

Not only did the LNA oppose the apparent double standards between women and men, and the inhumane treatment of prostitutes, but also the lack of consideration for social morality. The CD Acts were seen to promote sexual vice by allowing men to continue to avail of prostitution and 'the basis of the repeal case was a deep belief in the immoral nature of the CD Acts.'[73] The theme of sexual vice will be explored in depth to examine whether the campaign against the CD Acts was inspired mainly by a desire to secure an equality of treatment among the sexes, or to eradicate prostitution and find a moral solution, particularly in the case of the LNA. Therefore, an investigation of the

[73] McHugh, *Victorian Social Reform*, p. 27.

organisation's use of petitioning is required to offer further findings on the Irish LNA's campaign tactics and what motivated LNA members.

This chapter, first, addresses the geographical and demographical spread of support for repeal through petitioning and how petitioning helped to build the movement and organisation. This section will also show how, despite having a small number of members, the LNA was able to be influential through the act of petitioning. This section will demonstrate how LNA membership was drawn from Protestant communities, as the LNA was a group of religious women cooperating on the same issue. The absence of Catholic women from the organisation will also be addressed. The second section will address the practice of petitioning and how the LNA organised public meetings and combined them with petitioning to form the basis of the campaign. This section will also examine the relationship between the LNA in Britain and Ireland. The third section will demonstrate how the LNA manipulated traditional gender roles in order to appeal to lower-class men in order to obtain their support and make them aware of how the CD Acts would impact on their family. The final part of this chapter highlights the work contributed by Elizabeth Addey, the honorary secretary of the Cork branch of the LNA. Current literature has chosen to focus on Anna Haslam as the leader of the LNA and this case study will complement work on Haslam by demonstrating the LNA campaign from the perspective and contributions of a different leader. Addey typified the significant moral reformist characteristics of the LNA and its mid-level personnel beyond the national leadership, as will be examined in the chapter.

Petitioning and the reach of support for repeal

Petitioning was a vital political tool of the Irish LNA campaign. As with many disenfranchised groups, women struggled to voice their dissent against the CD Acts to Parliament and petitioning opened a window through which women

could protest. Between 1870-1881 a number of petitions favouring repeal were forwarded to London and 'mustered 85,759 signatures' of the 88 petitions forwarded, repeal associations sent 16 with 8,770 signatures and groups of unidentified Irish women, whom Luddy has suggested were likely the LNA, sent 9 petitions with 8,770 signatures.[74] This number seems quite insignificant when compared with the LNA movement in Britain. In 1878 alone, petitions bearing 115,132 signatures from across the United Kingdom were submitted to Parliament, but just 5,572 of these signatures were from Ireland. Of those Irish signatures, 3,528 came from Belfast, 253 from Ballymena, 375 from Dublin, 247 from Cork and 1170 from 'other places'.[75] This suggests that repeal activity occurred predominantly in Dublin and some other urban areas. Both Luddy and Quinlan have agreed that the Irish movement was itself confined to a small middle class following, and had little influence on the overall female population.[76] That is not to say however that the campaign in Britain did not have its own difficulties. It also struggled in the beginning to get attention of Parliament and the general public. Walkowitz has found that 'national press had lost interest and refused to cover the campaign; instead repealers had to rely on their own journals and on the provincial newspapers.'[77] This judgement indicates that the Irish and British LNA shared a common struggle and common difficulties that they faced as women leading a campaign that was deeply entrenched in discussions of sex and vice. Although it seems that the LNA in Ireland faced particular challenges, in terms of having less members compared to the LNA in Great Britain, which is reflected in the lower numbers of petitions sent to Parliament. As well as this, Ireland had a smaller population compared to

[74] Luddy, *Prostitution and Irish Society,* p. 149.
[75] *The Shield,* 6 Jul. 1878, p. 187.
[76] Luddy, *Prostitution and Irish Society,* p. 149; Carmel Quinlan, *Genteel Revolutionaries,* p. 97.
[77] Walkowitz, *Prostitution and Victorian Society,* p. 96.

Great Britain, potentially creating difficulties in extending the reach of the Irish campaign.

To better understand how the Irish LNA related to the parent branch, as well as the numerical value of its petitions, it is beneficial to consider the size of its membership. There is no definitive number of members of the LNA in Ireland, but through articles in *The Shield*, it appears the main areas of formalised activity were Dublin, Cork and Belfast. Maria Luddy has suggested that the Irish LNA was 'a very localised and small affair.'[78] And 'throughout its active period, from 1871 to 1885, the LNA in Ireland never had more than forty-nine subscribers, the majority from Dublin, Cork and Waterford.'[79] While Luddy is correct in her findings, the number of the organisation's subscribers is not the only measure of LNA activity.

Further investigation of reports in the *Shield* offers new evidence of the LNA's activities, rather than focusing on their subscribers, to indicate how much reach the organisation had. According to these reports, the campaign also spread out across other areas of Ireland. These areas included Armagh, Londonderry, Kildare, Donegal, Louth, Waterford, Limerick, Clonmel and 'many other places.'[80] During a meeting of the LNA in Cork in April 1880, Isabella Tod actually referred to those working in 'isolated places' and recommended that they 'try to meet together from time to time with those from other centres of work' to remind them of the 'great body to which they all belonged.'[81] This reference to 'isolated places' evidently refers to areas across Ireland that did not have a formalised campaign through the formation of a committee, as seen in Dublin, Cork and Belfast. This shows that the LNA was potentially larger than Luddy has suggested, although Luddy does acknowledge that despite the small

[78] Maria Luddy, *Women and Philanthropy*, p. 139.
[79] Luddy, 'Women and the Contagious Diseases Acts 1864-1886', p. 33.
[80] *The Shield*, 7 Mar. 1870, p. 7.
[81] *The Shield*, 3 Apr. 1880, p. 52.

size of the movement it still 'marked a new departure for Irish women'.[82] Whatever the size of the membership of the formal organisation to repeal the CD Acts, petitions clearly show that the campaign was able to mobilise a broader public of women and others as signatories to petitions and attendees of public meetings and other events.

As the LNA executive committee was composed mainly of Quaker women and other Protestant denominations, it was clear that religious bonds between these groups would be influential on the campaign. Petitions from religious groups came mainly from members of the Methodist and Presbyterian churches. The absence of Catholic participation is an issue that requires further investigating, but it could have possibly been as a result of disapproval from the Catholic church. An example of such clergy discontent occurred in 1871 when a Catholic Priest, Reverend McGuire, supported the repeal of the CD Acts but disapproved of women publicly discussing and learning about the details of these acts. Carmel Quinlan has suggested that such disapproval would have ensured non-participation of Catholics in the campaign.[83]

The low participation of Catholic women may have reflected social demographics. There was a significant imbalance in the number of middle-class Protestants compared to middle-class Catholics. Sean Connolly has analysed the clear social distinctions between Presbyterians, Anglicans and Catholics.[84] Anglicans were 'heavily over-represented among the landowning class' where they made up the majority of substantial proprietors.[85] In towns Presbyterians were over represented in middle-class occupations, whereas by contrast, the Catholic middle-class 'was small, and its membership dominated by groups of

[82] Luddy, *Prostitution and Irish Society,* p. 148.
[83] Quinlan, *Genteel Revolutionaries,* p. 93.
[84] Sean Connolly, *Religion and Society in Nineteenth-Century Ireland* (Dundalk, 1985), p. 4.
[85] Ibid, p. 4.

limited prestige and wealth.'[86] As early as the early nineteenth century, Catholics 'owned about one-third of total middle-class wealth.'[87] There were notable disparities in literacy for those over the age of five, as in 1861 around 46% of Catholics were unable to read or write compared to 16% of Anglicans and 11% of Presbyterians.[88] To fully understand why Catholic women were dissuaded from joining the LNA, or any of the organisations examined in this thesis, it is vital to understand these social disparities between the religious denominations.

LNA committees often took it upon themselves to organise meetings to encourage Protestant congregations to sign petitions and oppose the Acts, suggesting it was their own committees' networks that permit appeal to such congregations. These meetings often carried strong religious undertones as during a meeting in Dublin in 1885 'verses of scripture were selected and hymns sung, and prayers were offered for a blessing on the work in hand.' [89] In December 1881 the Belfast Ladies' Committee sought to mobilise the support of each congregation in town and 'several Ladies undertook the duty of inviting the leading ladies of their respective denominations to a drawing-room meeting, in order to arrange that no congregation should be overlooked.'[90] The first meeting was held by Isabella Tod at Albion Place and 'was well attended by Presbyterian ladies.' [91] This meeting was indicative of the importance of the petitions organised by the LNA. The women of the Irish repeal movement were evidently adept in their organisational skills and could bring members of their communities together in one mutual aim to repeal the Acts.

This also emphasises how integral social networks were as LNA members evidently relied on petitioners from their own social circles and communities.

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[86] Ibid
[87] Ibid, p. 5.
[88] Ibid.
[89] *The Shield*, 21 Feb. 1885, p. 27.
[90] *The Shield*, 1 Dec. 1881, p. 229.
[91] Ibid.

During the meeting they discussed 'the best means of bringing the opinion of the churches of the country to bear upon the House of Commons.'[92] The committee decided that a petition for the repeal of the CD Acts should be signed by the clergymen and office-bearers of every congregation that could be reached in time for the next session in Parliament. Following that 'a similar petition should be signed by all the women belonging to each congregation; but that these should be put together, so that the petition should represent all women belonging to that church in the town or neighbourhood.'[93] This method would show the strength of their numbers, while giving women their own separate petition and opportunity to voice their opinions alongside men. In addition to this, it was decided to seek the co-operation of the Gentlemen's Committee in Belfast and other committees elsewhere, in getting memorials to government signed by the heads or leaders of each church. Two ladies were chosen to represent each Presbyterian congregation in town and several others 'undertook to draw the attention of the wives of ministers and other ladies in other towns in Ulster, to the plans suggested, and to offer help in carrying them out.'[94]

Petitioning was a very important political tool for religious women during the campaign, as they could voice their opinions against the CD Acts without involving themselves directly in uncomfortable discussions on prostitution. The LNA often also received support from male members of the Methodist church, who were protesting the immoral implications of the CD Acts.[95] The attention the LNA's campaign brought to the CD Acts, encouraged other groups, particularly members of the Methodist community, to write their own petitions to send to parliament. This allowed them to become involved in the campaign, without involving themselves directly in discussions on female sexuality, which in itself

[92] Ibid.
[93] Ibid.
[94] *The Shield,* 1 Dec. 1881, p. 229.
[95] *The Shield*, 2 Aug. 1873, p. 256.

held a lot of stigma and discouraged women from being involved. An example of this can be seen in 1882, when Maurice Brooks, a member of the Dublin Corporation and of the Home Rule League party, presented a petition to government signed by 'women members of the congregational church, York-Street; women members of the Presbyterian Church Rutland-square, Dublin'. The same report noted that a meeting of women friends held at Eustace street prayed for the Contagious Diseases Act to be 'immediately and unconditionally repealed.'[96] These women likely submitted this petition as a result of the perception that the CD Acts encouraged members of the military to make use of prostitution.

The practice of petitioning

The practice of petitioning, that being the organisation of the campaign, allows for an examination of how the LNA enabled Irish women to participate in political activism. As discussed in the last section, signing a petition could appeal to those who did not want to speak about sexual matters publicly, however meetings to organise petitions also gave women a unique opportunity for them to speak on the topic. Petitions and public meetings combined together to form a formidable political tool, and allowed for the, albeit, limited spread of information. While the main branches resided in Dublin, Cork and Belfast, meetings were spread throughout the country. If men or women wanted to form a branch in their county, they were informed in the *Freeman's Journal* to contact various representatives such as Robert Chapman, Mrs Douglas, Mr Charles Eason, Mrs Anna Haslam or Mr Richard D. Webb. They were encouraged to do so as 'many hundred signatures have already been obtained to petition against these Acts.'[97] Evidently, petitioning could be used to encourage women to form

[96] *Freeman's Journal,* 24 May. 1882, p. 8.
[97] *Freeman's Journal,* 24 Feb. 1870, p. 1.

their own organisations by creating the idea that the LNA was growing more popular and successful and therefore more appealing for women to join.

Meetings often attracted respectable numbers of women, with over 70 attending a meeting held in Dublin in the Morrisons Hotel in May 1880.[98] As a result of this, the influence of the LNA was spreading through the employment of meetings and petitioning. Meetings also facilitated the signing of petitions to Parliament. One such meeting, as detailed in *The Shield*, was organised by the Belfast Ladies' Association at the Ulster Hall in 1870. During this event, 'several ladies addressed the meeting and resolutions condemnatory of the Acts and adopting petitions to both houses of parliament were unanimously carried.' [99] The article ensured to broadcast the fact that the *Freeman's Journal* had announced 'that agitation against the Acts is progressing vigorously in the North of Ireland.'[100] It was vital for the LNA to present a successful image of the movement. Meetings were the perfect arena in which to do this as they could directly address attendees and convince them that the movement was progressing and that petitions had to be organised in order to continue the spread of information to the public.

The methodology deployed to organise meetings was to invite leading members of the community, as well as prominent members of the LNA such as Josephine Butler. This would attract the attention of the public and encourage their attendance. It was also vital to publish advertisements in popular newspapers with a targeted audience, such as the *Nation* newspaper. The *Nation* was founded by members of Young Ireland, a movement which followed Daniel O'Connell and sought the emancipation of Catholics by repealing the 1800 Act of Union. Julie M. Dugger argued that the newspaper encouraged their readers to

[98] *The Shield*, 1 May. 1880, p. 65.
[99] *The Shield*, 7 Mar. 1870, p. 7.
[100] Ibid.

'overlook religious, political, and ethnic differences in order to create a united Ireland.'[101] The paper was also open to the 'promotion of women as writers and activists, long before they had the right to vote…'[102] This would make the *Nation* a suitable medium through which to reach an audience that was more likely to be open to supporting women in their activism. It is also notable that this paper had a Catholic Nationalist readership, which suggests there was indeed a desire to reach out to Catholics without directly involving them in its membership. The paper advertised the annual meetings of the Ladies National Association, on one occasion emphasising that it was to be 'a public meeting of women' with an annual report delivered by Mrs Josephine Butler.[103] Having a prominent member of the organisation present was a useful tactic in attracting the attention of women who had not yet been involved in the movement.

Meetings showcased the religious elements of the repeal campaign as the aims to get rid of the CD Acts were tied up in religious ideals of sin and morality. During a meeting of the Dublin Women's LNA in 1880, Margaret Agatha Meyrick spoke of the value of petitioning and encouraged women to sign as petitioning 'was one mode open to them of expressing their conviction, and the convictions of a number had weight. Those of her hearers to whom the subject was new, would leave the room with a responsibility upon them; they could never again plead ignorance of what went on in the dark in the alleys and courts of our cities.'[104] Meyrick was not only conveying the importance of women using all political methods available to them, but was deploying a type of "gospel" logic by reminding women that once they had been educated on the implications of the Acts, they were under a moral obligation to take action. This links with

[101] Julie M. Dugger, 'Black Ireland's Race: Thomas Carlyle and the Young Ireland Movement', *Victorian Studies* 48:3 (2006), p. 461.
[102] Ríona Nic Congáil, 'Young Ireland and The Nation: Nationalist Children's Culture in the Late Nineteenth Century', *Éire-Ireland,* 48:3 (2006), p. 38.
[103] *Nation*, 26 Oct. 1878, p. 16.
[104] *The Shield*, 21 Feb. 1880, p. 27.

Alex Tyrell's 'woman mission' concept as women were 'invited to play a part in reforming society and expunging it's blemishes through their morally uplifting influence'.[105] This demonstrates the central role petitioning had to the LNA as well as further emphasising the heavy moral reformist rhetoric frequently utilised by repeal activists.

Meetings also offered a safe space for women to exchange information on the campaign and to speak publicly on the matter. During this time, public spaces where there were discussions of politics, may have seemed intimidating to women, particularly if men were within the vicinity. Kathryn Gleadle has found that there were relatively few meetings that would openly turn a woman away, 'yet the courage it must have taken for a woman to enter a meeting composed entirely of men is a factor that would be woven into their consciousness.'[106] Therefore, it was vital for female led organisations, such as the LNA, to create spaces where women could become comfortably involved in such issues. Meetings were often held in Dublin and one gathering was keen to emphasise that they were 'open to all women.' [107] Being open to all women was indicative of the efforts of the Irish LNA to include working class women as well as their middle-class members. There were no details however on whether any lower-class women actually attended. Hanna Wigham, a member of the Dublin LNA committee, was offered the opportunity to address the meeting and 'pleaded the need of urging the better league protection of young girls.' In support of her speech, petitions were organised and sent to Parliament on this subject and signed individually, and also on behalf of the meeting collectively.[108] Meetings were occasionally held for women only, such as in Donegal where a meeting 'for Ladies only' was to be held 'for prayer, and to receive an account of the recent

[105] Tyrell, 'Woman's Mission', p. 205.
[106] Gleadle, *Borderline citizens*, p. 62.
[107] *The Shield*, 21 Feb. 1885, p. 27.
[108] Ibid.

meetings of the Christian Convention and Ladies' National Association in London.'[109] The fact the meeting was for women only suggests an effort being made to make women feel more at ease and comfortable. There were 'about fifty ladies present' at the Donegal meeting and 'most of them highly influential' and they left the meeting with 'a determination to work more energetically than ever for the removal of those infamous laws.'[110]

Meetings and petitions also offer some insight into the relationship between British and Irish activists. Petitions from Ireland were often covered in *The Shield*, under the title of 'Irish Intelligence.'[111] Notably, it was only news on Ireland and areas outside the UK, such as New Zealand, Switzerland and Cape Town, that were referenced in this way.[112] Reports from Scotland and Wales were not referred to in a similar fashion. This suggests that while the Irish movement was closely involved with the parent branch in Britain, there was still a perceived separation between the two. According to Maria Luddy, the function of 'the LNA in Ireland was to support the parent body in London.'[113] This suggests that there was a certain subservience or divide between the organisations, rather than a symbiotic relationship. Luddy acknowledged that there was, on occasion, division between the two movements, when she noted that despite the English branch of the LNA advocating for the support of rescue work of prostitutes, the Irish activists did not get involved.[114]

There were, however, many instances of the British and Irish branches working together. A repeal campaigner, Mr Joseph Edmondson of Halifax, had held two satisfactory meetings in the Dublin, one featured 50 members of the Society of Friends and another where he was received by the working committee

[109] *Belfast Newsletter,* 23 Mar. 1883, p. 4.
[110] *Belfast Newsletter,* 23 Mar. 1883, p. 4.
[111] *The Shield,* 18 Oct. 1873, p. 342,
[112] *The Shield,* 14 Apr. 1877, p. 99; *The Shield,* 25 May. 1878, p. 138; *The Shield,* 26 Aug. 1882, p. 174.
[113] Luddy, *Prostitution and Irish Society,* p. 149.
[114] Ibid, p. 152.

and a large number of its members.[115] *The Shield* noted that 'Our Dublin friends have recently been working in the face of much discouragement; and we shall look forward with much interest to the practical work which may be anticipated from this visit.'[116] This article reflects interest from the LNA in Britain to support the Irish organisation by sending over speakers to aid their campaign. The article appeared to excuse the poor results of the Irish campaign and suggested that an English speaker would make a difference. This evidence questions the idea that the Irish LNA were subservient to their British counterparts. There was a relationship between the two, evidenced also in Butler's visits to the country to give lectures on the CD Acts. They were not disconnected; they were sister organisations who shared many similarities in their campaign methods and their shared belief that the CD Acts had to be repealed. It is important to acknowledge that there were no major sources of contention or splits within the movement. As well as this, a significant relationship formed between public meetings and public petitions as combining both together would lead to better executed petitions and a better spread of information amongst different communities. While linked to Britain, the LNA adapted its tactics for a different political culture in Ireland and it built a movement off existing Irish women's religious and political activism networks.

Gendered language of petitioning

To get a broader understanding of the heavily gendered politics of the CD Acts, it is beneficial to acknowledge how upper-class and professional men approached the issue of repeal in Ireland. This offers a comparison of the role of female campaigners with those of their male allies and how gendered language featured in both of their arguments to see the Acts repealed. The text of doctors' petitions and protests speak to gender through their defence of womanly virtue and their

[115] *The Shield*, 18 Oct. 1873, p. 843.
[116] Ibid.

chivalrous duties. An article in the *Nenagh Guardian* in 1872 reported that the medical profession in Ireland had begun to refute the assumption that they were, 'to a man, in favour of the application to women of this country of the Contagious Diseases Acts.'[117] Subsequently a series of protests against the Acts to Parliament followed and were signed by 783 physicians, surgeons and general practitioners in medicine. 45 of these names reportedly came from practitioners in Dublin.[118] Despite the fact that many members of the medical profession supported the acts, these men did not witness any evidence that the spread of venereal diseases was limited as a result of the implementation of the CD Acts.

John Morgan, a doctor of the Westmoreland Lock hospitals, did not believe the Acts addressed the root of the problem, which was the continued allowance of military men to access prostitution.[119] He criticised the Commission for finding that 'the women who pursue a life of prostitution are healthier than honest women.'[120] Morgan did what most public figures failed to do as he accounted for the physical suffering and 'rapid deterioration of health' of women who contracted diseases.[121] Evidence of petitions from medical practitioners, and support from men such as Morgan, showed that while women activists appealed to their expertise as guardians of morality and purity of fellow women, doctors could appeal to their expertise as professionals to challenge whether the CD Acts were morally or medically justified and frame this as a response to medical concern. Their objection to the Acts also originated from a place of wishing to banish prostitution altogether, both for moral and medical reasons. These arguments paralleled support from some doctors in Britain as Josephine Butler and the LNA often sought support from the National Medical Association

[117] *Nenagh Guardian,* 13 Apr. 1872, p. 2.
[118] Ibid.
[119] John Morgan, *Remarks on the Recent Report of the Royal Commission of the Contagious Diseases Acts and its Application to the Voluntary Hospital System* (London, 1872), p. 1.
[120] Ibid, p. 6.
[121] Ibid.

(NMA) which 'intended to banish the impression that the medical profession was entirely in favour of the Acts.'[122] Evidence of petitions from medical practitioners, and support from men such as Morgan, showed the widespread influence of the repeal campaign across Ireland.

This brings into question the issue of gender politics of petitioning. The right to petition facilitated women's political agency but there were times when their petitions were not regarded with seriousness as evidenced in 1870, when in a House of Lords debate following the presentation of 30 petitions, Viscount Lifford claimed that some of the signatures were forged and some possibly signed by children. Women had a right to petition at this time that was accepted by parliamentarians, however, as this example shows, that does not mean that women's petitions are always treated respectfully or given equal weight. Lifford suggested that given the nature and subject of 'those Petitions referred, he thought it very doubtful whether women were thoroughly instructed as to what they were petitioning against, and he was quite sure that children knew no-tiling at all about it.'[123] Lifford was critical of the LNA as he claimed that statements which came from them were often 'illogical.'[124] In this case, it was the signatures of women that came under fire due to Lifford's belief that women could not have autonomously made the choice to sign it without being coerced or lied to. This further emphasises how women were not trusted to become engaged with issues of sexuality. Even though women had the right to petition, it did not mean they were always treated respectfully by male politicians who often tried to discredit petitions that they did not agree with, by emphasising fraud, misrepresentation, forgery, etc, in the signature gathering process. Lifford's claims were also reflective of the wider issue of fraud, controversies of which had become commonplace by the 1870s to all manners of petitioning campaigns. Sometimes

[122] McHugh, *Victorian Social Reform,* p. 152.
[123] *House of Lords Debates, 3rd Series* 201, cc 1264, 24 May, 1870.
[124] *HL Debs* 201, cc 1265, 24 May 1870.

fraud was committed accidentally due to the fact that many who wished to sign were illiterate and a petitioner would ask someone else to sign on their behalf. Or, some might have signed with pseudonyms to hide their identity for fear of judgement within the community.[125] Those with less political agency, such as members of the LNA, were regarded with more suspicion.

With members of Parliament voicing attitudes such as this towards the LNA, it was beneficial for members to keep men on side and encourage them to sign to try and maintain the legitimacy of their petitions. This was done by utilising traditional gender roles within the family sphere. The LNA attempted to appeal to the man's role as a husband and father by publishing 'Questions for working men' in the *Cork Examiner* in 1870. The article asked these men if they were 'willing that a law shall continue to exist which makes your daughters and wives liable to be arrested as prostitutes on the suspicion of a policeman, and forced either to submit to a shameful examination by Government Surgeons, or to imprisonment for three months?' The article attempted to elicit guilt and responsibility from men by directly questioning their role as the head of the family and whether they were carrying out their duties successfully. If they could not protect their wives and daughters, were they truly in control or were they just as vulnerable as the women under their care? The article also emphasised the dangerous effects of the double standards of sexuality, 'workingmen, who understand common sense, can Government succeed in stamping out disease by curing infected women, while it leaves infected men at large to contaminate women at their pleasure? .... The purest maiden in the land is liable to a disgraceful examination! The most dissolute man in the community no law dare

[125] Paul A. Pickering, ''And Your Petitioners & c': Chartist Petitioning in Popular Politics 1838-48', *The English Historical Review,* 116:466 (2001), p.384.

touch!'[126] This was evident of female activists using gender to encourage men to defend women, by suggesting that their objections and 'common sense' would carry more weight than that of women.

The LNA aimed to highlight the suffering of the working classes by also publishing 'Things for working men to remember' in the same article. This emphasised how a richer man could protect his wife but 'yours as they go to their daily work will be at the mercy of policemen, in plain clothes the better to act as spies on them.'[127] Here, the LNA utilised both gender and class divides to emphasise the effects of the CD Acts on the lower classes. They reminded working class men of their lack of power within society, similar to the lack of power experienced by women. The article warned that if 'Parliament passes tyrannical laws for the women, who are weak and defenceless and cannot resist; it is but one step further to pass tyrannical laws for men, who are poor and weak.'[128] This was an attempt by the Irish LNA to manipulate working class anxieties and fears by not only emphasising the dangers that the CD Acts posed to their wives and daughters, who despite not being prostitutes were automatically under danger of suspicion as a result of their lower class, but also to principles of liberty that men themselves prized.

To give another example of this class appeal to working men, in 1873 the repealers published a guide on how to write a petition and recommended that petitions be signed specifically by working men and working women distinct from others, with the text emphasising that the 'members of the working classes' wished to protest the CD Acts 'on the ground of their immorality, and their injustice to the poorer classes of women, who alone are subjected to their

[126] *Cork Examiner*, 7 Feb. 1870, p. 1. Though the article does not state it is written by the LNA, it gives an address for petitions to be signed which was the address of the LNA in Cork and one of its most notable members, Elizabeth Addey.
[127] Ibid.
[128] Ibid.

operation.'[129] Ultimately activists aimed to use gender to appeal to men to manfully defend women and were perhaps inspired by Josephine Butler's own ideals that due to women's inability to access instructions in laws and constitutions meant they were 'driven continually to urge our fellow workers to strengthen themselves for the warfare in which we were engaged.'[130] She believed strongly in the need for men and women to work together on women's issues due to their own inability to access parliamentary equality. This petition demonstrated how the LNA encouraged lower class women to embrace their social status and utilised these men and women as a means of garnering sympathy from members of the public.

Gender continued to be a campaign weapon for the LNA as the fears of Irish mothers were deployed to bring attention to how the CD Acts threatened the place of gender within the status quo. A letter was published in the *Wexford People* in February 1870 and was signed by 'An Irish Mother' who worried that 'the women of the entire nation' were to be placed under unjust surveillance. [131] This mother urged that every 'Irishman protest against it and oblige their representatives to oppose it in Parliament?' This Irish mother attached a letter written by Josephine Butler, and asked that it be read out during a meeting of the Wexford Union Board of Guardians. In this letter, Butler detailed the unfair treatment of women who could be forced in front of a court to defend themselves with no 'proper trial allowed her' and could be punished on the word of the police officer alone.[132] Despite this emotive appeal for support, the Board of Guardians had only a short discussion and in the end felt it 'was better to let it remain on the table for a future day, particularly as it did not affect Ireland.'[133] As

[129] *The Shield*, 22 Feb. 1878, p. 60.
[130] Josephine Butler, *Personal Reminiscences of a Great Crusade* (London, 1910), p. 40.
[131] *Wexford People*, 5 Feb. 1870, p. 8.
[132] Ibid.
[133] Ibid.

this suggests, the use of gender was not always successful in attempts to receive support. Despite this failure, the letter remains a powerful source of evidence of women subverting disempowering gender roles, in order to use the image of 'defenceless women' as a way of gaining political capital and publicising their campaign. What is striking is the fact that the Wexford Union believed the issues that Butler outlined, did not affect Ireland. Perhaps it was the ignorance of local authorities such as Wexford, which made it difficult for the Irish LNA campaign to succeed on the same level as that of its British counterparts.

Elizabeth Addey and the repeal campaign in Cork

This section reveals the significance of neglected activists outside Dublin and Belfast in creating a women-led social reform movement. Elizabeth Addey was the secretary of the Cork Ladies' Committee of the LNA and her husband George Addey was also a member of the Cork NARCDA men's committee.[134] A case study of the couple provides insight into a wider activist world while providing an outlook on how the campaign was approached in Cork, which is particularly notable given the fact that the port of Cork was a subjected district. Addey, like Isabella Tod, was willing to organise petitions and address the issue publicly, despite the stigma involved in discussions of sexual vice. She actively argued that the CD Acts had an immoral impact on society. On 24 April 1877, she wrote to the editor of the *Shield* to inquire as to whether 'the Acts improved the morality of Cork?'[135] Addey's words exemplified the attitudes of many middle-class women towards prostitution. They did not ask why these women were prostitutes nor address the failings of society that led them to this 'industry'. Rather, they criticised the government for introducing laws that practically encouraged prostitution to continue. Addey attempted to demonstrate that the CD Acts were having no effect in the Cork districts, as she recounted an incident

[134] *The Shield*, 1 Jun. 1874, p. 12.
[135] *The Shield*, 21 Apr. 1877, p. 4.

of indecency as she 'observed a soldier closely followed by a prostitute who recommended herself to the man's attention thus: ''I am Mary Collins . . . *in the employment of her Majesty!*''.' Addey questioned whether it was 'not horrible that the industry which is most freely opened to women, that of disgrace, is under the immediate patronage of the Queen of England?'[136] Evidently, Addey was not as concerned with the sexual double standards the CD Acts imposed nor the suffering of those the Acts targeted. She was primarily concerned with their immoral implications and the fact that the most open 'career' available to women was prostitution. Her views reflect the idea of 'conservative feminism', as she was part of a campaign that sought to protect women, and was also a member of the DWSA, but in this case she was motivated by conservative ideals regarding respectability and public morality, which judged prostitution and viewed women affected by the CD Acts as both victims and as 'fallen' women.

Addey remained steadfast in her views towards the CD Acts as she sent a letter to the Editor of the *Shield*, in which she addressed the 'Effect of the Acts on public order' in Strand, Youghal, on 18 September 1880.[137] She claimed that 'the education bestowed upon our prostitutes' by medical and clerical staff had not contributed to their 'moral elevation'. As proof of this she attached an article to her letter, which recounted an incident involving a 'well-dressed woman' called Kate Noonan who was charged with disorderly conduct 'the previous night by shouting and collecting a crowd.'[138] This incident in Patrick Street exemplified the Victorian ideals of social conduct and feminine morality in Ireland at this time. Even women, who were not soliciting, but were causing a 'disturbance' could be arrested and held under harsh scrutiny. Not only this, it showed how easily lower-class women could be arrested and subjected to examinations in lock hospitals against their will. According to the article 'one side of Patrick street-

[136] Ibid.
[137] *The Shield*, 16 Oct. 1880, pp. 7-8.
[138] Ibid.

from Winthrop street to the Grand Parade- was besieged by women of the prisoner's character, who used language shocking to everyone who heard it.' It dramatized the image of lower-class women using foul language, referring to it as 'a vice' that had become so rampant in the area. Noonan was the only woman out of the 12 who was arrested however she later 'seemed to be penitent, on promising to go to a convent, was allowed out, the case against her being adjourned for one month.'[139] The fact that Addey publicised this event indicates that she organised petitions and campaigned against the Acts primarily for the restoration of morality and the extermination of prostitution from Ireland. Addey was one example of the kind of members of the LNA who valued morality particularly over the equality of the sexes.

Addey took part in the organising of petitions, as evidenced in April 1870 when she contacted Lord Dufferin, a British diplomat, requesting that he sign a second petition from the inhabitants of Cork, which she claimed already had 1459 signatures.[140] Later that year in June she also published the correspondence she and her husband had with Nicholas D. Murphy, a Liberal MP for Cork. Elizabeth Addey requested that Murphy support a bill to repeal the CD Acts. Yet again Addey displayed her strong distaste for the Acts and she asked Murphy to use his voice and vote to aid in removing the 'tyrannous and immoral law' which 'degrades women and debauches men.'[141] George Addey also accounted for the work they had done through petitioning to show proof of the widespread desire of the people to have the Acts repealed as he noted 'the number of petitions that have been forwarded from Cork and its vicinity give a very imperfect idea of the wide-spread and deep feeling of abhorrence to the Acts, prevalent amongst the

[139] Ibid.
[140] One letter from Elizabeth Addey, Patrick St., Cork to Lord Dufferin, 5 April. 1870, General Correspondence, 1856-1902. D1071/H/B/A/49, PRONI.
[141] *Irish Examiner*, 7 Jun. 1870, p. 4.

middle and lower classes.' [142] Petitions were used here to convey the personal feelings of members of the public as well as referencing the fact that both the middle and lower classes were united in their disagreement of the Acts. This was perhaps emphasised to convey an image of the LNA campaign as one that was not differentiated by class but was united with the working classes on this issue. Addey also remarked there was 'difficulty (always existing) of getting persons willing and able to devote their time towards getting petitions signed otherwise, the numbers might have trebled so great is the indignation generally felt.'[143] This was further evidence of the difficulties some LNA members encountered with petitioning. Such difficulties had a direct effect on the LNA's ability to generate support for the organisation, despite George Addey's previous claim that their petitions were widespread.

Evidently, Elizabeth and George Addey were primarily motivated to repeal the CD Acts as a result of social reformist ideals. Investigating this couple, however, offers further reflections on the campaign tactics of the LNA outside of Dublin. It is clear that the campaign in Cork was a formal organisation run similarly to the executive committee in Dublin. The committee itself was composed of its president, Mrs Wilelmina Taylor and the treasurer was Hannah E. White, a signatory of John Stuart Mill's 1866 women's suffrage petition.[144] The committee, like Dublin, organised a campaign around petitioning and meetings. One such meeting held in April 1889 featured Isabella Tod as a speaker and a petition, organised by its president Wilelmina Taylor, was signed at the close of the meeting.[145] This method of combining petitions and meetings, alongside the

[142] Ibid.
[143] Ibid.
[144] *The Shield*, 14 Jan. 1871, p. 351.; For biographical information on Hannah E. White see Elizabeth Crawford, *The Women's Suffrage Movement in Britain and Ireland: A Regional Survey* (Abingdon, 2006), p. 253.
[145] *The Shield*, 3 Apr. 1889, p. 52.

invitation of a well-known speaker, was also used by other branches of the LNA in Britain and Ireland.

Elizabeth Addey persevered by additionally donating money in support of the movement as well as writing to newspapers in order to bring attention to the issue.[146] Due to her efforts she was regarded as a 'well known and well respected' member of the LNA by members of the British organisation.[147] Upon Addey's death in 1886,the year the CD Acts were repealed, she was remembered by the E*nglishwomen's Review* as one of 'the very earliest supporters and workers of the movement against State Regulation of Vice, of Women's Suffrage and of many other questions.'[148] Anna Haslam, is often regarded as the powerhouse of the LNA movement in Ireland, however, as this chapter has shown, there were other members who have been forgotten about in current literature. Elizabeth Addey proves that there was diffuse leadership in different localities and that the campaign was not as Dublin centric as current literature might convey. Addey also shows how petitioning acted as an important universal campaign tool for joining the campaign, despite an activist's reasoning for campaigning.

Conclusion

This chapter, overall, offers a fresh perspective on the growth of women's political and bodily autonomy through the use of petitioning as a way of asserting their limited independence. It broke down societal taboos surrounding discussions on sexuality and equality between the sexes. It is clear from the evidence uncovered here, the CD Acts and petitioning marked a change in Irish women's political activism. The foundation of the LNA in Ireland marked a small yet significant milestone in the progress of Irish female political involvement. The movement did campaign for repeal from a moral standpoint but it also set in

[146] *The Shield*, 27 Jun. 1870, p. 146.
[147] *The Shield*, 1 Sept. 1875, p. 5.
[148] *Englishwoman's Review*, 15 Dec. 1886, p. 57.

motion, the desire to work towards a cause on behalf of women, and the LNA was a vital starting point for the eventual foundation of the Dublin Women's Suffrage Association in 1876.

This chapter also demonstrates the symbiotic relationship shared between the Irish and British LNA. It is evidently more accurate to view them as equal members of an overall organisation of the LNA. It is important to acknowledge their societal differences, but it is equally important to remember that Ireland was a part of the union of Britain and should not be regarded as being completely separate from the events that occurred there. Therefore, it is vital to understand how the Irish and British LNA paralleled one another in their campaign and their experiences. It is clear that, for Irish women, as for campaigners in Britain, the Acts not only enshrined the double standards of sexual morality but also attacked moral ideals of social acceptability. This was a dual campaign that sought to defend women's bodily autonomy while also arguing against prostitution as a profession. While this was a socially progressive movement, in that it provided women with a leading role in a political organisation, it still held onto the traditional belief that women played an important role in social and moral reform.

The most significant finding of this chapter was the role petitioning played in the mobilisation of Irish women in the LNA campaign. Despite the Irish LNA having less members compared to the LNA in Britain, the evidence of repeal petitions in numerous areas across Ireland shows that the campaign did have some reach outside of Dublin, Belfast and Cork. This has additionally revealed the main campaign tactics of the Irish LNA, which was a combination of petitioning with public meetings. The aim of this was to attract women to LNA meetings and encourage them to sign petitions at the close of the event. Petitioning has also shown that while women activists protested the Acts based on the vulnerability of women, referring to them as weak and defenceless, their

male allies were able to rely on their respected medical credentials to argue that the CD Acts were not medically effective and were thus cruel and invasive.

Chapter two: The Dublin Women's Suffrage Association and the Irish Women's Suffrage and Local Government Association: Organisation, Petitioning, the Campaign for Municipal Franchise and the Establishment of Women Poor Law Guardians in Ireland.

This chapter examines the beginning of a formal organised campaign that focused solely on women's attainment of political rights and how the main constitutional form of protest – petitioning – was essential to this process. This chapter will also offer a comparative analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the Irish movement when set against those of its British counterpart. In 1876, Anna Haslam formed the official Dublin Women's Suffrage Association (DWSA), which was later renamed as the Irish Women's Suffrage and Local Government Association (IWSLGA) in 1898. This chapter will focus on both the organisation's early years of activity while known as the DWSA and its later years as the IWSLGA. This chapter will examine its organisation and consider the question of the extent to which it remained a branch of the London-based National Society for Women's Suffrage (NSWS), and later on the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies (NUWSS), or was a more autonomous, independent association that was an equal partner with its sister organisations across the Irish Sea. By examining the DWSA/IWSLGA through these perspectives, a broader understanding of the movement and its contributions to suffrage will be established, as well as its wider role in fostering women's political activism in Ireland.

Despite struggling to gain support from the public, the DWSA still benefitted from the support of many dedicated influential men and women. While the DWSA was a small movement in terms of its membership, it succeeded in establishing an early suffrage movement in Ireland, laying the foundation for future generations of Irish women. In particular, the gaining of the Irish Municipal Franchise between 1896 and 1898 was a key achievement of the DWSA

and opened up a new arena for Irish women's political participation, as well as pointing towards the parliamentary franchise. Local government provided a new arena for the political activity of Irish women. This new account of the DWSA's key role in the emergence of women's political activism in Ireland is based on the DWSA's minute book, the IWSLGA's published reports, in combination with articles from the *Women's Suffrage Journal* (*WSJ*), the leading suffrage journal of the time.[149] The evidence demonstrates that the DWSA transcended its small membership to speak to and represent a wider public through petitions, print and public meetings. It also shows how the organisation grew following its transition into the IWSLGA.

This chapter will examine how women took on a leadership role more consistently through the DWSA's successor body, the IWSLGA, and how the organisation's focus on promoting women on to local government and public positions helped emphasise and promote Irish demands for women's rights. It will examine how the IWSLGA enabled women to increasingly enter the world of politics, thus laying the groundwork for their belated entrance into parliamentary politics in the twentieth century. Moreover, this chapter will examine how the IWSLGA was transformed into a movement that maintained a focus on suffrage, but also promoted women's entry into local politics, emphasising their changing tactics. An article published in the *Waterford News and Star* in 1899 outlined the range of roles women sought in local government. The author noted that 'every day it is becoming more evident that women are to an enormous extent in every branch of life usurping the positions of men, we have ladies in professions, we

[149] Minute Book of the Dublin Women's Suffrage Association (DWSA) and the Irish Women's Suffrage and Local Government Association (IWSLGA) (1876–1913). DWSA/1-DWSA/9, National Archives of Ireland [NAI], [Digital Facsimiles consulted: https://www.nationalarchives.ie/article/minute-book-dublin-womens-suffrage-association-irish-womens-suffrage-local-government-association-1876-1913/] [Last Accessed, 5 September 2019]; Irish Women's Suffrage and Local Government Association Annual Reports, 1896-1919. AA18427, National Library of Ireland [NLI].

have lady Poor Law Guardians, we have lady district and county councillors, we have lady clerks and typists in abundance.'[150] Clearly, the public positions women were pursing and the changes to society as a result of the Poor Law Guardians Bill did not go unnoticed. By extending their capabilities and contributing to the running of local government, the IWSLGA were able to better influence public opinions on the involvement of women in spheres that previously were the preserve of men

The involvement of Irish women in local politics would additionally involve them in one of the most pressing aspects of Irish politics.[151] The Poor Law of 1838 introduced a nationwide system of poor relief based on the workhouse and financed by a local property tax and 'remained the primary form of poor relief in Ireland until the 1920s.'[152] Virginia Crossman has found that the late 1860s and 1870s in Ireland saw further expansion of Poor Law Guardians in the field of public health due to various Acts, such as the Public Health Acts of 1874 and 1878, which also further increased the powers of Poor Law Guardians.[153] Evidently the responsibilities of those involved on the Board of Guardians continued to grow throughout the period, which demonstrates how influential these roles would be for women, who would be involved in the care of the sick and destitute within their communities.

The DWSA has been examined most extensively by Carmel Quinlan and Marie O'Neill, while other historians such as Rosemary Cullen Owens have briefly examined the DWSA and their role in the early Irish suffrage

[150] *Waterford News and Star,* 10 Nov. 1899, p. 7.
[151] Peter Gray, *The Making of the Irish Poor Law, 1815-43* (Manchester, 2009), p. 3.
[152] Virginia Crossman, *The Poor Law in Ireland, 1838-1948* (Dundalk, 2006), p. 1.
[153] Ibid, p. 42.

movement.[154] The DWSA has also been examined through the biographical studies of Anna and Thomas Haslam.[155] Owens has suggested that up until 1896, the DWSA was 'preaching to the converted', suggesting a limited appeal beyond core activists.[156] This chapter challenges this claim by pointing to the wider impact of the DWSA, regardless of its relatively small membership. Other scholars, such as Luddy, have implied that the DWSA received little widespread support and concluded that there was little public interest in suffrage.[157] This chapter will investigate whether or not the movement had influence outside of Dublin and if the DWSA contributed to the progress of the overall suffrage movement in Britain and Ireland. This will address how far the DWSA was able to politicise women and carve out a space for them in the world of Irish politics, despite the difficulties generating support for petitions and in raising funds for the organisation.

Patricia Hollis has crucially identified how local government and parliamentary politics were 'linked at every step.'[158] Yet while works by historians, such as Hollis, have proven how important Municipal Franchise was for women, the transformation of Irish women's position in local politics has been relatively neglected in such works. This chapter will provide this vital perspective, which is particularly important given the fact that the fight for women's role in local politics took much longer than their English counterparts. Local government power was worth having for its own sake as 'local elections

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[154] Marie O'Neill, 'The Dublin Women's Suffrage Association and Its Successors', *Dublin Historical Record*, 38:4 (1985), pp. 126-140, Owens, *A Social History of Women in Ireland*, Quinlan, *Genteel Revolutionaries*; Carmel Quinlan, ' "Onward Hand in Hand": The Nineteenth Century Irish Campaign for Votes for Women', in Louise Ryan and Margaret Ward (eds.), *Irish Women and the Vote: Becoming Citizens* (Revised Edition, Dublin, 2018).

[155] Mary Cullen, 'Anna Maria Haslam' in Mary Cullen and Maria Luddy (eds.), *Women, Power, and Consciousness in 19th-century Ireland: Eight Biographical Studies* (Dublin, 1995).

[156] Rosemary Cullen Owens, *Smashing Times: A History of the Irish Women's Suffrage Movement, 1889-1922* (Dublin, 1984), p. 27.

[157] Luddy, 'Women and Politics', p. 104.

[158] Patricia Hollis, *Ladies Elect: Women in English Local Government, 1865-1914* (Oxford, 1987), p. 29.

were also increasingly regarded as straw polls of national political opinion.'[159] For Irish and British women alike, this offered them valuable opportunities in understanding politics on a local level for preparation in parliamentary politics in the future. Hollis also notes that this line of work aligned with common stereotypes of womanly virtues and that as local government 'enlarged its responsibilities, as care of the young and old, poor and sick moved from the private to the public domain, so did women.'[160] As this chapter will demonstrate, Irish suffrage activists frequently utilised gender stereotypes to defend their introduction to local politics. This chapter will build on this by providing a comparative perspective on how Irish women approached and experienced local politics compared to women in Britain.

In the case of Ireland, historians have offered case studies of particular figures and places. Diane Urquhart, for example, has conducted an extensive study into women Local Guardians in Ulster, which established that these women's involvement in poor law was instrumental in 'initiating important reforms that helped to reshape poor law administration'.[161] Carmel Quinlan has briefly looked at these experiences from the perspective of Irish women in local politics, primarily the IWSLGA, through her work on Anna Haslam.[162] Quinlan has established how Haslam, and the IWSLGA, presented women as superior beings, due to their concern with converting those who were prejudiced against the election of women to public office. Quinlan also argues that women's involvement in local government boosted their confidence in their own competence.[163] In her broader study on Irish local government, Virginia Crossman has also acknowledged how poor law boards provided an 'important training ground' for women, who could demonstrate their fitness for other civic

[159] Ibid.
[160] Hollis, *Ladies Elect,* p. 6.
[161] Urquhart, *Women in Ulster Politics*, p. 148.
[162] Carmel Quinlan, *Genteel Revolutionaries*; Quinlan, 'The Nineteenth Century Irish Campaign'.
[163] Quinlan, *Genteel Revolutionaries,* p. 136-137.

responsibilities, such as parliamentary elections.[164] While these are valuable contributions, they seem to have missed the transformation of the position of Irish women as a whole as a result of these series of laws. This is why the broader analysis in this chapter, centred on the IWSLGA, is necessary. It is significant because activists in Britain and Ireland were themselves increasingly of the view that local politics offered training for the franchise and public life but also a route to it. Electoral experience would increase 'their self-confidence and often had a politicizing effect especially on women who approached local government from a background in philanthropic work'.[165] This chapter will demonstrate how the IWSLGA focused their campaign on ensuring women took advantage of their newfound opportunities.

While no women in the UK gained the right to vote in parliamentary elections until 1918, the later nineteenth century saw something of a breakthrough in terms of the opening up of the right to vote in local elections and hold locally elected offices for women. British women were technically permitted to stand for election as guardians under the 1834 Poor Law Amendment Act. Despite this, while there was no legal bar preventing women from running, the poor law commission stated that '"the objections to the appointment of a female" were so clear that it would be inconceivable for there to be an election of a woman guardian.'[166] The first woman Poor Law guardian, Martha Merrington, was not elected until 1875.[167] The Municipal Franchise Act of 1869 also gave female ratepayers the right to vote in local elections, though this did not extend to Irish women.[168] Similarly to the IWSLGA, the NSWS also showed interest in the introduction of women to local politics following the Municipal Franchise

[164] Virginia Crossman, *Local Government in Nineteenth Century Ireland* (Belfast, 1994), p. 55.
[165] Pugh, *The March of the Women*, p. 76.
[166] As cited in Richardson, *Political Worlds of Women*, p. 96.
[167] Ibid, p. 96.
[168] Ibid, p. 103.

Act, as suffrage lecturers travelled across the country to organise meetings and urged women 'to take part in local government.'[169]

Although Ireland lagged slightly behind these developments, a spate of reforms from the 1880s transformed the position of Irish women in terms of local politics. In 1887 the Unionist MP William Johnson piloted the Municipal Corporations (Ireland) Act through Parliament which allowed every householder and ratepayer regardless of sex to elect members of Belfast's city council. Building on this, in 1896 Johnson succeeded in passing the Poor Law (Ireland) (Women) Act of 1896 that allowed women, with certain property qualifications, to participate in and stand for positions in poor law administration.[170] This resulted in 100,000 women being admitted to the municipal franchise.[171] It allowed women ratepayers to stand as Poor Law Guardians under the same conditions as men but they were debarred from county and borough councils until 1911 when they would be admitted under the Local Authorities(Ireland) (Qualification of Women) Act.[172] As Poor Law Guardians, women's role would be confined to poor and medical relief.[173] The Local Government (Ireland) Act of 1898 simplified the whole system of Irish municipal administration and admitted women as voters and candidates in district council elections.[174] To become an elector required numerous qualifications and prospective female candidates had to be either a registered householder, a rated occupier of holdings valued at 10 pounds and upwards, as lodgers occupying a room or rooms of the value of 4s weekly, as non-resident leaseholders with a term of sixty years to run and as non-resident freeholders having a profit of £20 a year.[175] This was a time of significant

[169] Hollis, *Ladies Elect*, pp. 30-31.
[170] Urquhart, *Women in Ulster Politics*, p. 152.
[171] Ibid, p. 121.
[172] Desmond Roche, *Local Government in Ireland* (Dublin, 1982), p. 46.
[173] Ibid, p. 47.
[174] Urquhart, *Women in Ulster Politics*, p. 152.
[175] Irish Women's Suffrage and Local Government Association, *Suggestions for Intending Women Workers Under the Local Government Act, April 1901* (Dublin, 1901). P 790(11), NLI, pp. 2-3.

change for certain qualifying Irishwomen who were now being permitted to act in official public roles within Irish society.

The transformed legal context for Irish women and changed the role of the IWSLGA, which made the tactical decision to split their work between ensuring that women were availing of the new opportunities they had been afforded, as well as continuing to campaign for parliamentary suffrage. In 1897 in recognition of this change, the Association first renamed itself as the Women's Suffrage and Poor Law Guardians Association.[176] In 1898 it then changed its name for a final time to the IWSLGA, owing to the 'important work which lies before them' in connection with the Local Government Act.[177] Dropping Dublin from their title also reflected the increasing hub of suffragism throughout the country. The Dublin committee believed that municipal franchise would 'do more to educate Irish women politically than anything that has yet taken place in our section of the United Kingdom' and the committee believed that Irishwomen's desire for parliamentary franchise would be 'thereby greatly stimulated.'[178] The IWSLGA, which had always been champions of the education of both men and women on suffrage issues, thought that involvement in local politics would be of great educational value for women in preparation for their eventual entrance into parliamentary politics.

Similarities can be drawn with the experience of women in local politics in Britain. Patricia Hollis has surmised that local government was more than 'practical rate-funded philanthropy' as it required women 'to seek election; mobilize an electorate; gain the endorsement of political parties and the confidence of local interest groups' as well as canvassing, committee work and exposure in the press and on public platforms.[179] Through these activities, women

[176] Minute book, 30 March, 1897. DWSA/3, NAI.
[177] *Dublin Weekly Nation,* 15 Oct. 1898, p. 2.
[178] IWSLGA report for 1896. AA18427, NLI, p. 4.
[179] Hollis, *Ladies Elect,* pp. 6-7.

believed this was an 'apprenticeship for parliament.'[180] The process whereby women were involved in local political life was a vital development for women to advance their claim to equal citizenship as it allowed women to demonstrate their skills in organised public work. The nineteenth century also saw the passing of a series of Married Women's Property Act's in 1870, 1879 and 1882 which allowed married women to own their own property and now allowed them to campaign for voting rights on the same conditions as men, which they had previously been excluded from.[181] This transition within the IWSLGA saw the movement continue its work, but with a clearly defined purpose.

This chapter will begin with an investigation of the inner workings of the DWSA and IWSLGA committee, in terms of membership, finances and their use of informal political networks. Additionally, it will become clear that women took on a more prominent leadership role as the DWSA transitioned into the IWSLGA, and as a result of this transition their finances and support base also grew. These sub-sections will demonstrate the social base of the movement and its aspirations to convert new recruits. There will be an examination of their fundraising achievements in order to speculate why they were relatively less successful in comparison to their British counterparts. These sub-sections will also gradually reveal the relationship that existed between the Dublin and British suffrage branches and whether this was an equal or a hierarchical relationship. Next, the second section of chapter will examine the process of petitioning undertaken by the DWSA. This was the favoured campaign method of the DWSA both for expressing their opinions on suffrage and for educating the Irish public on their cause. Petitioning would become a fundamental part of their organisational tactics and was regularly brought up at their drawing room and public meetings and this section will address why they focused more so on

[180] Ibid, p. 7.
[181] Owens, *A Social History of Women in Ireland,* p. 17.

petitioning over other activities. The third section will expand on their identity as an outward facing and successful campaign by investigating how the DWSA organised public meetings. Public meetings, combined with petitioning, were integral to the promotion of the Irish suffrage movement. It also provided women with opportunities to speak in public. This section, in conjunction with the previous section on petitioning, will demonstrate how the DWSA managed to promote political activism, albeit to a limited degree.

The fourth section of this chapter will examine how Irish women focused their campaign on Poor Law Guardians and Municipal Franchise. A significant finding is that the different legal context in Ireland meant that Irish suffragists worked in a different environment to British women. Municipal Franchise was the first stepping stone towards the ultimate goal of the parliamentary franchise and was a significant victory for the DWSA, which presented it as a more successful organisation than its internal culture and finances would suggest. This section will show that the DWSA placed more importance on producing petitions that contained the signatures of women householders in order to fully express the discontent of these women to Parliament. In addition to this, this section reveals how the DWSA relied on maternalistic rhetoric to argue for women's inclusion as Poor Law Guardians and how this rhetoric on women's traditional societal roles continued to be utilised by the IWSLGA. The fifth section expands on this by examining the IWSLGA's new strategy of shifting its focus to local government and promoting women in those positions. The organisation did this through education and encouraging women to stand for election. This will show how the IWSLGA's aims did not change, as they still wanted women's suffrage, but activists now saw local government as a means to that end. The sixth section conducts a focused study on particular women guardians. This study shows that while many of these women did often have elite backgrounds, they were still pioneers by entering local government for the first time. Finally, the chapter will

demonstrate how the IWSLGA was part of a wider network of women's activism, shown by connections of individuals involved in many different causes. It also addresses the relationship between the IWSLGA and other suffrage organisations.

The DWSA/IWSLGA committee

I. Committee members

To understand the DWSA's contributions to the mobilisation of Irish women, it is necessary to examine the committee and how the organisation was run, particularly in its early years. In addition to the DWSA in Dublin, the other main areas of suffrage activity were in Belfast and Cork. Isabella Tod formed the Northern Irish Women's Suffrage Society (NIWSS) in Belfast in 1872 and in southern Ireland, Elizabeth Addey of Cork was listed by the *WSJ* as the Honorary Secretary of the South of Ireland Committee.[182] This section, however, will focus primarily on how the DWSA, and later the IWSLGA, was run based on evidence found in the organisation's minute books. The DWSA held meetings every year, with 213 meetings held from its formation in 1876 up to 1913. [183] As demonstrated in figure 2.1, committee meetings were held rather irregularly in the early years of the DWSA which averaged 3 meetings a year between 1876 to 1896. These meetings, as Carmel Quinlan argues, were 'mainly concerned with the presentation of petitions to parliament.'[184] This suggests that meetings in the early years were held primarily for strategic purposes through petitioning campaigns, further demonstrating how central petitioning was to the DWSA. Meetings started to be held with more regularity from 1896 onwards as the DWSA transitioned into the IWSLGA and expanded their campaign tactics to focus on local government as well as parliamentary franchise.

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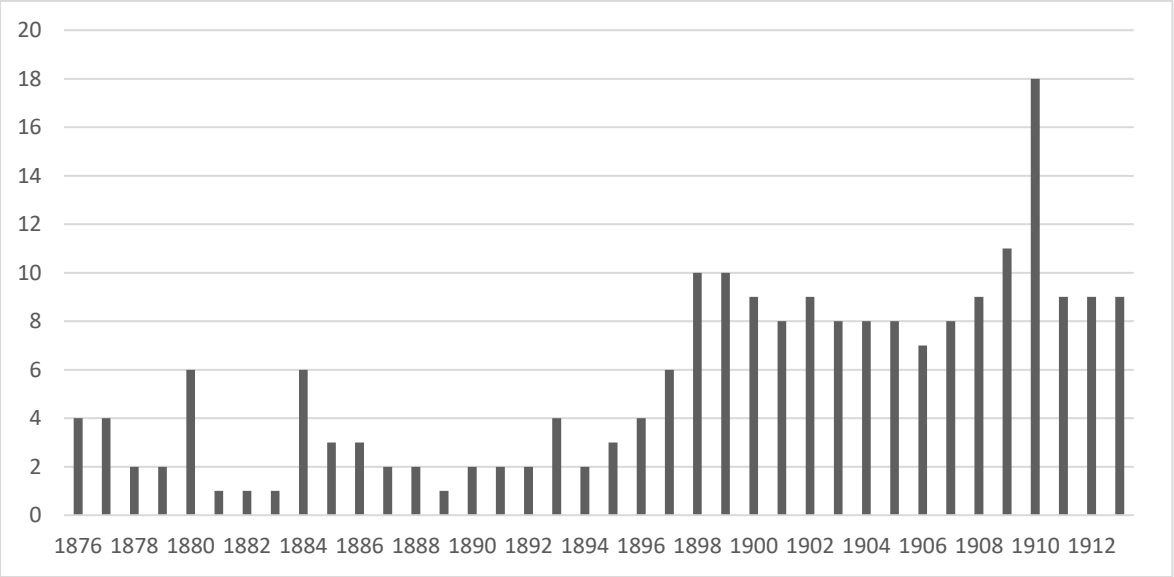
[182] *Women's Suffrage Journal*, 1 Apr. 1878, p. 50.
[183] Minute book, 11 December, 1913. DWSA/9, NAI.
[184] Quinlan, *Genteel Revolutionaries*, p. 122.

Figure 2.1. Meetings held by the DWSA/IWSLGA 1876-1913.[185]



Based on archival evidence, it is not clear if the DWSA had much of a membership beyond the committee and subscribers who made donations. There were approximately 109 committee members who joined the DWSA at some point between 1876 and 1889.[186] The committee had both male and female members. Female members of the early Dublin committee included Anna Haslam, Barbara Corlett, Emily and Helen Webb, Rose McDowell and Alice Oldham.[187] Male committee members included political figures, such as Thomas Haslam; Thomas Wallace (T.W.) Russell, who would become Liberal Unionist MP for South Tyrone in 1886; Maurice Brooks, a member of the Home Rule League and MP for Dublin City; Thomas Edward Colonel Taylor, Conservative MP for Dublin county; Charles Eason, a wholesale and retail Newsagent; William Johnson a former Conservative MP for Belfast and Alfred Webb, the radical reformer and Nationalist.[188] Dublin MPs Colonel Taylor and Maurice Brooks were often charged with the duty of presenting petitions to Parliament.[189]

[185] Minute book, 21 February, 1876- 11 December 1913. DWSA/1- DWSA/9, NAI.
[186] List of Committee members, no dated specified, DWSA/9, NAI.
[187] O'Neill, 'The Dublin Women's Suffrage Association', p. 127.
[188] Ibid.
[189] Minute book, 11 July, 1877. DWSA/1, NAI; Minute book, 16 July, 1878. DWSA/1, NAI.

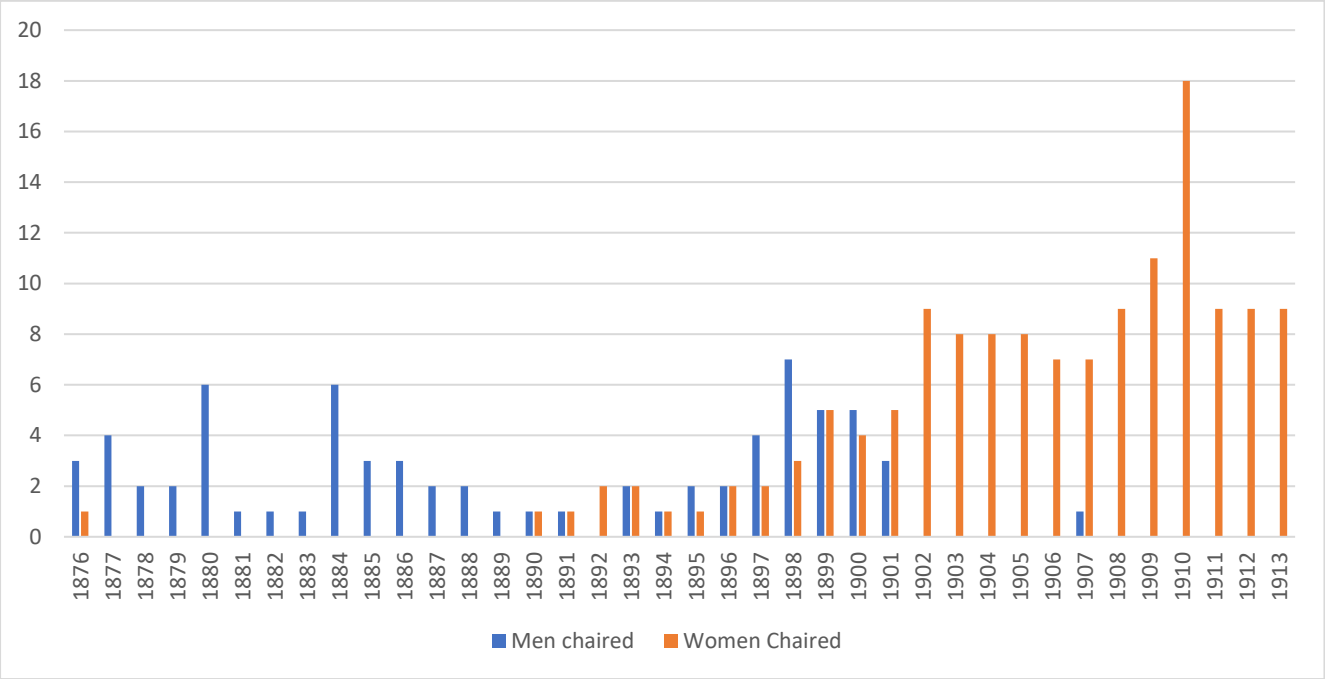
Other politicians who were not direct supporters of the DWSA also submitted petitions on their behalf, such as Charles Stewart Parnell who submitted suffrage petitions in 1877 and 1878.[190] These connections emphasise the high political networks that the DWSA was able to utilise in its campaign, which were probably valuable in attracting attendees to meetings and then signatures to petitions. MPs could also potentially advise on timing and framing of particular petitions to maximise impact. Importantly, as suffrage in Ireland and Britain was a non-party campaign, it was valuable to attract support from parliamentarians across the Nationalist-Unionist divide.

Committee meetings in the early days were usually chaired by men but they were eventually superseded by women. As seen in figure 2.2, men primarily filled the role of chairman of the committee in the first 10 years of the DWSA's operation, with Charles Eason sitting as chairman during their inaugural meeting.[191] Thomas Haslam chaired 33 times, T.W. Russell chaired 7 times and Alfred Webb chaired 2 times.[192] Elizabeth Russell was the first woman to chair in April 1876 and a woman did not chair again until Harriet Russell, the wife of T.W. Russell, sat as chair in November 1890.[193] Men certainly played a dominant role in the committees' early years but this did change over time and of the 213 meetings chaired, 33% were chaired by men while 67% were by women.[194] Lady Margaret Sarah Dockrell, who would later play a prominent role in the IWSLGA, first chaired in May 1894 and chaired for a total of 82 committee meetings.[195] Numerous other women also took on the role, including Adeline Hill Tickhill who chaired 17 times, Helen Warren who chaired 11 times, Mrs E. Buchanan who chaired 6 times, Hanna Keating who chaired 4 times, Dr Winifred Dickson who

[190] Minute book, 16 July, 1878. DWSA/1, NAI; Minute book, petitions for 1878. DWSA/9, NAI,
[191] Minute book, 21 July, 1876. DWSA/1, NAI.
[192] Minute book, 11 December, 1913. DWSA/9, NAI.
[193] Minute book, 4 April, 1876. DWSA/1 NAI; Minute book, 12 November, 1890. DWSA/2, NAI.
[194] Minute book, 21 February, 1876- 11 December 1913. DWSA/1- DWSA/9, NAI.
[195] Minute book, 11 December, 1913. DWSA/9, NAI.

chaired 3 times, Helen G. McKerlie, Mary E. Shaw, Miss Welply, Miss La Touche and Mary Hayden all chaired twice and Annie Ladd, Beatrice Towashend, Lucy Smithson and Isabella Richardson all chaired once.[196] It is clear, based on these findings, that men played a prominent role in the DWSA before it transitioned into the IWSLGA. From 1902 onwards, women chaired almost all meetings of the IWSLGA and their growing leadership role will be examined further in this chapter.

Figure 2.2. Men and women chairing meetings of the DWSA/IWSLGA, 1876-1913.[197]



The dominance of male chairmen throughout the DWSA's early years suggests there was an idea that men were, even in a women's organisation, best suited to lead meetings. Even in a progressive suffrage organisation there were still elements of traditional gender roles within its membership. This differed somewhat to the NSWS that was dominated largely by women such as Emily Davies, Francs Power Combe and Lydia Becker, with the involvement of some

[196] Minute book, 21 February, 1876- 11 December 1913. DWSA/1- DWSA/9, NAI.
[197] Minute book, 21 February, 1876- 11 December 1913. DWSA/1- DWSA/9, NAI.

men such as Jacob Bright and Richard Pankhurst, who were radical liberals involved in the Manchester society.[198] The committee later reported their pride of the involvement of male members as 'co-operation with men has been a distinguishing feature of the policy of the association from the first.'[199] Aside from the dominance of male chairs, there was still a female leadership over the DWSA through the secretaries Anna Haslam and Rose McDowell, as well as the presence of many women on the committee. This suggests that while women took a more active role in the organisation, this role was balanced against getting leading male endorsement. Such endorsement added extra credibility to the campaign, particularly through the influence of political figures such as T.W. Russell. The DWSA took an existing gender stereotype to make an argument for women's inclusion in politics, rather than their exclusion, which was similar to the maternalist language often utilised by nineteenth-century women's pressure groups.

In terms of the composition of the DWSA committee, a list of committee members was noted at the back of the DWSA minute book. This data is unfortunately unstructured and incomplete but it is clear that most members were from Dublin with a few in other counties such as Louth and Galway. [200] Many names had been crossed out suggesting these were members who left at some point or had died. Carmel Quinlan has found that the DWSA committee was primarily composed of middle-class Quakers, Presbyterians and Protestants. Members such as the Haslams, Corlett and Helen and Emily Webb were members of the Society of Friends.[201] There is little to no evidence of the involvement of Catholic women but Quinlan has found that David Sherlock, a Roman Catholic MP for Kings County, was involved in the DWSA and chaired

[198] Sandra Stanley Holton, 'Women and the Vote', in June Purvis (ed.), *Women's History: Britain, 1850-1945, An Introduction* (reprint, New York, 2000), p. 281
[199] As cited in Quinlan, *Genteel Revolutionaries*, p. 122.
[200] List of committee members, DWSA/9, NAI.
[201] Carmel Quinlan, 'The Nineteenth Century Irish Campaign ', p. 27.

some committee meetings.[202] The reasons for the non-participation of Catholics are probably similar to those identified in the LNA in chapter 1 of this thesis, that being the social and demographical disparities between the Catholic and Protestant middle classes. The absence of Catholic women could also partially be explained by the fact that the DWSA committee worked within their own social circles as their membership was dominated by those of the Quaker faith. The DWSA committee, as we shall see, relied heavily on their own social circles and those from a similar social and religious background. Therefore, it is unlikely that they reached out to or encouraged Catholic women to join the organisation. It is possible that Catholics may have signed DWSA suffrage petitions, but this cannot be proven for certain due to the fact that signatures on these petitions were not recorded in the SCPP records.

The middle-class dominance can be attributed to, as previously noted, the fact that the committee worked within their own social circles which were largely middle class. Carmel Quinlan has suggested this dominance could also be explained by the fact that education 'was a vital element in the development of feminist consciousness.'[203] However, this suggestion on Quinlan's part is based on the assumption that all these women had received a higher education, which was not guaranteed simply because of their middle-class background. In some cases, a higher education was not deemed necessary for upper and middle-class women.[204] The most likely reason for the middle-class character of the DWSA was that lower-class women were effectively excluded from the suffrage movement during its early years due to the cost of membership. In the very first meeting Thomas Haslam proposed that 'subscribers of 2s/6d and upwards be considered as members of the association.'[205] This immediately ensured that the DWSA

[202] Quinlan, *Genteel Revolutionaries,* p. 123.
[203] Quinlan, 'The Nineteenth Century Irish Campaign', p. 27.
[204] Owens, *Smashing Times,* p. 14.
[205] Minute book, 21 February, 1876. DWSA/1, NAI.

would have a limited membership, but petitions could be used as a way to reach all sections of society as signing a petition was open to everyone.

The DWSA's membership base changed following its transition into the IWSLGA. As the number of women holding locally elected office grew, so new committees of the IWSLGA were formed across the country, such as in Kingstown, Coleraine, Dungannon, Portadown and several other places.[206] The aim of the IWSLGA was to 'promote the formation of women's suffrage and kindred associations in all the leading towns of Ireland.'[207] This contrasted with the DWSA, which became a central suffrage organisation due to the lack of activity outside of Dublin. Overall, the IWSLGA's membership displayed a 'very marked increase'.[208] The committee felt that the movement was 'immediately practical' and that nothing had happened in their time that was as 'powerful a stimulus' to encourage women to take their 'legitimate share in public work.'[209] There was no specific number given for the number of members who joined the IWSLGA, but in 1903 the committee reported their membership had gone up from 138 in 1899 to 339 in 1903, which they believed was 'conclusive proof' that they made the right decision to focus on local government as well as parliamentary franchise.[210] In 1907 they also noted that 50 new members had joined which was referred to as encouraging.[211] Overall, then it seems that the IWSLGA made slow yet steady progress in the decade following the Irish local government reforms.

The IWSLGA was not only an extension of the DWSA, but also a transition into a new pressure group which is shown by the increase in leadership roles undertaken by some of its newer members who were also involved in local

[206] IWSLGA report for 1898. AA18427, NLI, p. 7.
[207] IWSLGA report for 1904. AA18427, NLI, p. 1.
[208] IWSLGA report for 1897. AA18427, NLI, p. 5.
[209] Ibid.
[210] IWSLGA report for 1903. AA18427, NLI, p. 5.
[211] IWSLGA report for 1907. AA18427, NLI, p. 19.

politics. The Dublin committee did retain many of its old members after 1898 and Anna Haslam and Rose McDowell remained in their positions as Honorary Secretaries. The aforementioned Lady Margaret Sarah Dockrell, joined the committee in 1894 and took on a prominent role in the IWSLGA by chairing the majority of their meetings. In addition to this, Dockrell became the only female member of the Blackrock Urban Council in 1899 and the election of women such as Dockrell was reported as a 'pleasant innovation in modern municipal life.'[212] Dockrell was also the first woman appointed chairman of the Blackrock Urban Council in 1906. According to the *Newry Reporter*, Dockrell was elected to this position by her colleagues due to her 'great administrative ability and the services she has rendered the township' and was said to have a 'wide knowledge of local affairs.'[213] Given her expansive political experience, it is unsurprising that Dockrell would take on a notable role in the IWSLGA. Dockrell acts as an example of the benefits of involvement in politics at a local level as she gained the experience necessary to help run a growing political organisation such as the IWSLGA.

As a measure of the growing importance of the IWSLGA, the Belfast-based NIWSS became a branch of the Dublin-based IWSLGA, up until 1909 when the NIWSS officially became the Irish Women's Suffrage Society (IWSS).[214] By the late 1890s, the IWSLGA had a network of committees across Ireland. In 1898, there were 9 branches of the IWSLGA located in Belfast, Sligo, Tralee, Skibbereen, Clare, Roscommon, Coleraine, Kingstown and Dungannon.[215] By 1908 there were 10 branches but the branches in Sligo, Kingstown and Dungannon had disbanded, while new branches had formed in Cork city, Derry, Meath and Wexford.[216] Demonstrating the continuity of their membership, the branches in

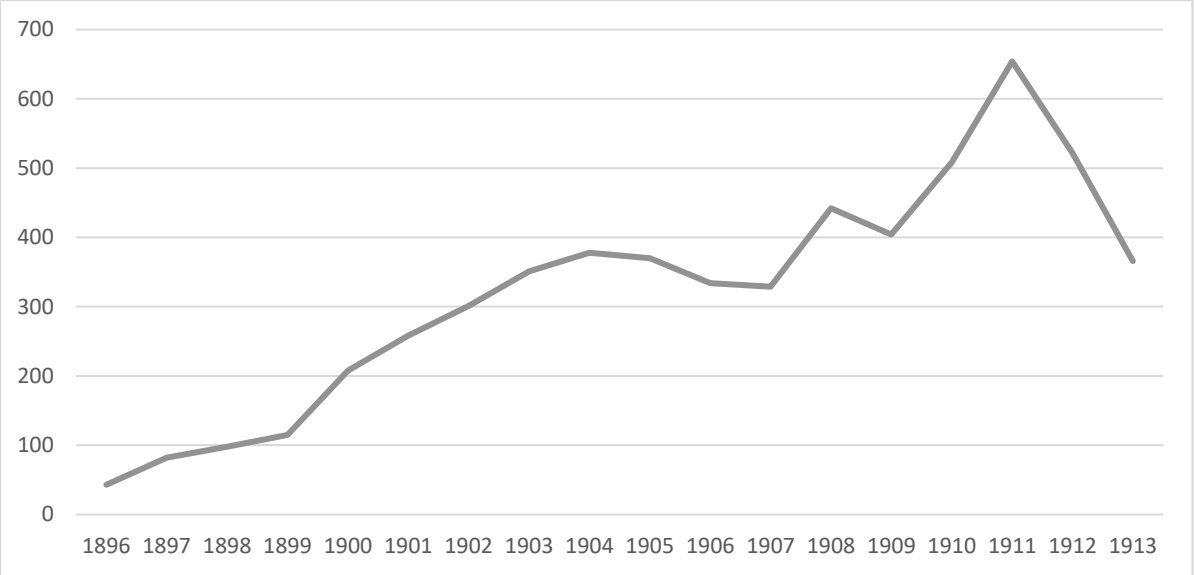
[212] *Dublin Evening Herald,* 20 Feb. 1899, p. 1.
[213] *Newry Reporter,* 27 Jan. 1906, p. 6.
[214] Urquhart, *Women in Ulster Politics,* p. 11.
[215] IWSLGA report for 1898. AA18427, NLI, p. 10.
[216] IWSLGA report for 1908. AA18427, NLI, p. 18.

Tralee, Skibbereen, Clare and Roscommon all retained the same Honorary Secretary between 1898 and 1908. Of these secretaries, 63% were married while 16% were unmarried, which indicates that married women dominated leadership roles within the IWSLGA.

As well as expanding its network of branches beyond the original strongholds of the DWSA (Dublin, Cork, and Belfast), the IWSLGA also possessed an expanding base of subscribers (Figure 2.3). Furthermore, the IWSLGA was more diverse in the religious background of its membership. Mary Cullen has found that by 1912, even though Protestants remained in the majority, there was a stronger Catholic presence than before.[217] These changes in the IWSLGA's support base and membership have clearly shown that the organisation grew significantly during its transition from a suffrage organisation to a pressure group that additionally focused on electing women to positions in local government. This was done in the hope that this would, in turn, progress the movement for parliamentary suffrage, as this chapter will demonstrate.

[217] Cullen, 'Anna Maria Haslam', p. 183.

Figure 2.3. IWSLGA subscribers, 1896-1913.[218]



Anna Haslam has received the most attention in the history of the movement, particularly in Carmel Quinlan's *Genteel Revolutionaries* which focuses on the DWSA from the perspective of Anna Haslam and her husband Thomas. This is understandable as Haslam was the driver of the movement, having attended every single meeting of the DWSA from its inception.[219] Quinlan has rightly suggested that Haslam was 'the true mover of the committee', with the minutes of the meeting recorded consistently in her handwriting.[220] Haslam dedicated her life to suffrage, but the focus on her has led historians to assume that she was the main contributor to the movement. As honorary secretary she would have received the most attention in contemporary publications, as she acted as a representative of the organisation.

Haslam was not the only member to have contributed to the running of the organisation. The breadth – and limit – of the DWSA and IWSLGA's activism is more important to understanding its achievements – and limits – as a movement. Therefore, it is better to view the movement as a collective rather than

[218] IWSLGA reports for 1896-1913. AA18427, NLI.
[219] Minute book, 11 December, 1913. DWSA/9, NAI.
[220] Quinlan, *Genteel Revolutionaries*, p. 125.

through the lens of the leadership. For example, Rose McDowell's name consistently appeared alongside Haslam's when attending meetings and was also a point of contact for the DWSA/IWSLGA.[221] Barbara Corlett had been involved in the suffrage movement from 1866 when she became secretary of the Queen's Institute, the Dublin branch of the society for promoting the employment of women. She was also one of the Dublin signatories to sign the pioneering suffrage petition, which was presented to the House of Commons by John Stuart Mill in 1866.[222] Following her death in October 1891, she was remembered in the *Englishwoman's Review* as a 'pioneer' of the movement to employ women in Ireland.[223] As mentioned previously, Lady Margaret Sarah Dockrell, alongside other women, also took on a prominent role in chairing meetings later on. Furthermore, beyond key members, many more women were actively involved in the movement, whether through collecting signatures for petitions, organising meetings, or donating money. In these various ways, the DWSA/IWSLGA was an important organisation for promoting political activism more generally and outside its membership.

II. **Finances and British support**

The finances of the DWSA provide an insight into how they raised and spent their funding, although detailed information on how the money was spent was only provided on certain years. Many of the minutes simply recorded the balance for the year. Minutes from the later years of the DWSA began to add in the cost of overall expenses and subscriptions but did not specify what the expenses were. These records of their finances highlight that the DWSA was not only small in terms of their membership but also in terms of their funding, particularly in comparison to some of their English counterparts. In an attempt to raise funds a

[221] *Women's Suffrage Journal*, 1 Apr. 1878, p. 50.
[222] Crawford, *The Women's Suffrage Movement in Britain and Ireland'*, p. 252; Quinlan, *Genteel Revolutionaries*, p. 21.
[223] *Englishwomen's Review*, 15 Oct. 1891, p. 280.

few years after their formation in November 1877, it was suggested by T.W. Russell and Barbara Corlett 'that it is desirable that even members of the committee should try to raise from 5/ to 10/ money from friends in aid of the funds of the association before the close of the year.'[224] This suggests that they relied primarily on funding from existing supporters or sympathisers. To achieve this, Eason suggested organising a number of drawing room meetings over the coming year. The secretaries were instructed to 'send a copy of this resolution to any members of the committee who are not present, and to request any ladies willing to hold a drawing room meeting to communicate with the secretaries.'[225] These findings reveal that women relied on mobilising their informal social networks through home meetings, largely to maximise donations from existing social circles and supporters rather than through seeking new recruits or a wider membership in terms of its social base.

Table 2.1. Financial statement of a DWSA public meeting for 1877.[226]

Public meeting	**Total**
Rent of Room	£7 10s 0d
Stewards	14s 6d
Advertisements	£2 9s 0d
Postage	£1 5s 0d
Printing	£6 15s 6d
Total expenditure	£18 14s 0d
Deficit	£5 12s 10d

[224] Minute book, 5 November, 1877. DWSA/1, NAI.
[225] Ibid.
[226] Minute book, 11 July, 1877. DWSA/1, NAI. This entry did not record how much income the committee had prior to expenses.

Table 2.2. A detailed example of the DWSA's financial statement for 1878.[227]

Income	**Total**
Balance in Hand	£7 3s 3d
Subscriptions and donations	£20 0s 6d
Total	£27 3s 9d
Expenditure	**Total in pounds, shilling pence**
Public meeting	£17 11s 4d
Petitions	£8 1s 8d
Postage	£2 3s 6d
Total	£27 16s 6d
Balance on hand	12s 9d

Table 2.3. Financial statement for the year 1879.[228]

Income	**Total**
Subscriptions	£11 19s 6d
London committee donation	£15 0s 0d
Overall	£26 19s 6d
Expenditure	**Total**
Public meeting	£7 4s 2d
Petitions	£6 15s 0d
Stationary	£2 13s 2d
Balance on hand	£9 14s 5d

Evidently, the DWSA devoted the majority of funds on public meetings and petitions and this chapter will prove how a combination of the two became the DWSA's main campaign strategy. The committee also, as expected, relied

[227] Minute book, 13 February, 1878. DWSA/1, NAI.
[228] Minute book, 15 January, 1879. DWSA1, NAI.

heavily on donations and subscriptions. In 1879 they received a donation from the London committee, indicating the organisation had struggled to raise enough funds for their activities. [229] Between the years 1878 to 1893 the DWSA had a paltry average balance of £6 4s 5d.[230] Between the years 1890 and 1897 they had collected an average subscription balance of £5 10s 7d and spent £5 5s 1d on expenses.[231] These are not significant numbers which provides further evidence of how slowly the suffrage movement was growing in Dublin.

In order to get a better understanding of how these figures reflect the running of the DWSA, it is worth comparing them with finances from the British suffrage societies. In comparison with other suffrage societies, the DWSA seems to have had limited finances. For example, the Manchester Society had an income of £ 2,222 and expenses of £ 2,087 in 1875 and an income of £ 2,325 and expenses of £ 1,094 in 1884.[232] Although Manchester had a larger population than Dublin (by 24 percent based on table 2.4) it clearly was able to access funds by a far greater factor. Even Societies based in other provincial cities, such as Nottingham and Bristol, which were smaller and less organisationally developed than Manchester, were able to raise equal or greater sums than the DWSA even though Dublin's population was greater than Bristol and Nottingham. The Nottingham Society had an income of £34, 1s, 6d in 1884 while in 1889 the Bristol Society noted receipts amounting to £209 6s 2d and after expenses had just 7s

[229] Ibid.
[230] Based on minute book entries from 13 February 1878; 15 January, 1879; 28 January, 1880; 14 January 1884; 3 January, 1885; 20 January 1886; 9 December, 1887; 4 January, 1889; 26 February, 1890; 16 September, 1891; 2 February, 1892; 27 January, 1893. DWSA/1-DWSA/2, NAI.
[231] Based on minute book entries from 12 November, 1890; 26 February, 1890; 28 April, 1891; 2 February, 1892; 13 February, 1895; 3 October, 1895; 27 January 1897. These years were chosen as they had the least yearly gaps of detail provided in comparison to earlier years and so provide more reliable data. DWSA/2-DWSA/3, NAI.
[232] *Women's Suffrage Journal,* 1 Dec. 1875, p. 157; *Women's Suffrage Journal,* 1 Dec. 1884, p. 260.

9d.[233] This suggests that they outperformed the Dublin Society in relative and per capita terms.

Table 2.4. Population statistics for selected UK cities, 1881.[234]

City	Population
London	3,816,483
Manchester	520,669
Dublin	418,910
Bristol	263,652
Nottingham	184,688

This disparity between Dublin and their English counterparts can be explained in part by the fact that the central committee was the main hub of all suffrage activity in Britain and would have had a higher volume of middle-class supporters. Manchester also only had a slightly higher population than Dublin but Manchester was part of a widening network of suffrage organisations that formed in 1867. They had already begun their work towards Municipal Franchise long before the DWSA. Manchester was also the base of the *Women's Suffrage Journal* which was founded by Lydia Becker, the secretary of the Manchester

[233] *Women's Suffrage Journal,* 1 Jan. 1884, p. 29.; *Women's Suffrage Journal,* 1 Feb. 1889, p. 40.
[234] Population of London 1881 cited in Vision of Britain, Number of the Population and Rates of Increase, [http://www.visionofbritain.org.uk/census/EW1881GEN/3] [Last Accessed, 10 September, 2019]; Population of Manchester 1881 cited in Vision of Britain, Population statistics [http://www.visionofbritain.org.uk/unit/10033007/cube/TOT_POP] [Last Accessed, 10 September, 2019]; Population of Nottingham 1881 cited in Vision of Britain, Population statistics, [http://www.visionofbritain.org.uk/unit/10168600/cube/TOT_POP] [Last Accessed, 10 September, 2019]; Population of Bristol 1881 cited in Vision of Britain, Population statistics, [http://www.visionofbritain.org.uk/unit/10056676/cube/TOT_POP] [Last Accessed, 10 September, 2019]; Population of Dublin 1881, Central Statistics Office, [https://www.cso.ie/px/pxeirestat/Statire/SelectVarVal/saveselections.asp] [Last Accessed, 10 September, 2019]/

branch of the NSWS.[235] The suffrage movement was simply larger in Britain, with 66 local committees already formed in 1872.[236] This might also reflect wealth and class differences, as outlined in chapter one, with a smaller middle-class community in Dublin, reflecting broader under-development of Ireland economically. Nottingham, which had a lower population than Dublin, appeared to have a similar financial situation and in relative terms performed better than Dublin in mobilising funds. Bristol however also had a lower population than Dublin and collected far more funds in one year than Dublin did. This suggests that the suffrage movement in Ireland did not garner attention on the same level of their English counterparts as evidenced by their struggle to raise money, perhaps as a result of wealth and class differences in potential support.

Another reason for these differences was offered by Reverend W.A. MacDonald, who hosted a drawing room meeting of the DWSA in January 1879. MacDonald feared that the DWSA was not well known as they had not raised much money despite meetings being organised and 'a paid canvasser employed'.[237] He deduced that if funds were available 'deputations might be sent to the provinces, and much more interest excited in the cause.'[238] Evidently, the reason for the DWSA's lack of support could be explained by a lack of funds to pay for campaign activities but it would prove difficult to raise funds without donations from a large support base from the beginning.

The DWSA occasionally relied on subsidies from the London committee to help organise public meetings. The London committee 'kindly assisted' with 'defraying' the expenses of a costly meeting arranged in 1878.[239] They also

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[235] Linda Walker, 'Lydia Ernestine Becker' in H.C.G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (eds.) *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 2008) [https://doi-org.ezphost.dur.ac.uk/10.1093/ref:odnb/1899] [Last Accessed, 10 September, 2019]
[236] *Women's Suffrage Journal,* 1 Aug. 1872, p. 109.
[237] *Freeman's Journal,* 1 Feb. 1879, p. 7.
[238] Ibid.
[239] Minute book, 16 July, 1878. DWSA/1, NAI.

received £15 in 1879 and another £15 in 1885.[240] This indicates that while the DWSA benefitted from the London branch of the NSWS, there was still a sense of hierarchy with the London central committee at the top of it as the DWSA turned to it in times of difficulty rather than trying to resolve their financial problems alone. This might have been done by making arrangements for members of a lower class paying a lower fee, or by the committee holding more regular public meetings and increased petitioning to draw more attention and sympathy to the movement. This might have been difficult to execute, hence why this relationship with the Central Committee in London was so beneficial to the DWSA.

Despite this financial inequality, the two branches maintained an amicable relationship. In 1919 Dora Mellone, the secretary of the Irishwomen's Suffrage Federation, reflected that the committee has always co-operated actively with the London society.[241] Helen Blackburn, secretary to the Central Committee of the NSWS, regularly corresponded with the DWSA and attended some drawing room meetings.[242] She also recalled the encouragement, energy, sympathy and experience of Anna Haslam.[243] This demonstrates the importance of personal relationships between key individuals such as Haslam and Blackburn within the broader suffrage movement in Britain and Ireland. Eliza Wigham, secretary of the Edinburgh Society, also attended a meeting in July 1877 in College Green in Dublin and offered the DWSA words of encouragement, telling the members that 'the work is uphill and the opposition at present very envenomed, eventual victory is certain.'[244] Following the split of British suffrage movement in 1888, between those who wished to include party political associations and those who did not, the DWSA decided that they supported Millicent Garrett Fawcett, who

[240] Minute book, 15 July, 1879. DWSA/1, NAI, Minute book, 11 March, 1885. DWSA2, NAI.
[241] IWSLGA Report for 1919. AA18427,NLI, p. 4.
[242] Minute book, 29 October, 1884. DWSA/2, NAI; Minute book, 28 April, 1891. DWSA/2, NAI.
[243] Helen Blackburn, *Women's Suffrage: A Record of the Women's Suffrage Movement in the British Isles, with Biographical Sketches of Miss Becker* (London, 1902), p. 216.
[244] Minute book 11 July, 1877. DWSA/1, NAI.

disagreed with party-political affiliation and retained the NSWS under non-party rules.[245] This relationship with their British counterparts would prove to be beneficial for the DWSA as they offered financial support to continue their work and contribute to the UK-wide petitioning and speaking campaigns.

An increase in subscribers following the DWSA's transition into the IWSLGA also had a positive effect on the IWSLGA's finances. Table 2.5 shows how the committees subscriptions increased substantially during their years as the IWSLGA. It also shows how they were able to invest more money in their campaign activities, which included public meetings of which they held 12 between the years 1896 and 1913 and spent on average £7 14s 7d. They also spent a significant amount on typewriting and printing, which included letters to MPs and IWSLGA literature, on which they spent on average £14 11s and a quarter pence between 1896 and 1913.[246] The IWSLGA's income and expenditure for 1897, (tables 2.6, 2.7), offers a more detailed example of how the organisation's spending changed as they dedicated more funds to printing educational literature for women. These pamphlets provided information on poor law and on how to stand for positions as Poor Law Guardians and shows how the IWSLGA's campaign focused on educating women in matters relating to local politics.

[245] Minute book, 9 December, 1888. DWSA/2, NAI.
[246] IWSLGA reports for 1896-1913. AA18427, NLI.

Table 2.5. IWSLGA's total income and expenditure from 1896-1913.[247]

Year	Receipts	Payments	Total
1896	£13 3s 1d	£9 7s 5d	£3 15s 8d
1897	£28 17s 8d	£20 12s 5d	£8 5s 3d
1898	£43 4s 9d	£26 8s 11d	£16 15s 10d
1899	£49 19s 6d	£34 10s 10d	£15 8s 8d
1900	£57 11s 11d	£37 7s 10d	£20 4s 1d
1901	£69 10s 2d	£45 2s 9d	£24 7s 5d
1902	£78 8s 3d	£57 12s 8d	£20 15s 7d
1903	£75 19s 3d	£60 5s 6d	£15 13s 9d
1904	£80 17s 3d	£65 8s 1d	£15 9s 2d
1905	£86 17s 6d	£63 16s 0d	£23 1s 6d
1906	£80 7s 3d	£62 13s 6d	£17 13s 9d
1907	£69 14s 2d	£46 15s 6d	£22 18s 8d
1908	£91 16s 0d	£67 7s 8d	£24 8s 4d
1909	£79 3s 10d	£51 17s 3d	£27 6s 7d
1910	£100 14s 2d	£83 9s 2d	£17 14s 2d
1911	£86 8s 6d	£68 14s 2d	317 14s 2d
1912	£82 14s 11d	£69 0s 3d	£13 14s 8d
1913	£62 9s 5d	£54 8s 8d	£8 0s 9d

[247] IWSLGA report, statements of income and expenditure for 1896-1913. AA18427, NLI.

Table 2.6. IWSLGA's income for the year 1897.[248]

Income	**Total**
Balance to hand	£3 15s 8d
Subs/donations	£24 14s 6d
Papers sold	7s 6d
Total Income	£28 17s 8d

Table 2.7. IWSLGA's expenditure for the year 1897.[249]

Expenditure	**Total**
Subs to London	£1 5s 0d
Miss Tod's memorial	£1
Use of room	10s
Print 500 reports	£2 5s 0d
2000 Poor Law suggestions	£2 2s 0d
Letters to members	£3 3s 6.5d
Stationary	17s 5.5d
Poor Law and other literature	£3 5s 5d
Postage	£6 4s 0d
Total Expenditure	£20 12s 5d
Overall balance	£8 5s 3d

While these were encouraging numbers for the IWSLGA, by 1909 the committee felt that they needed larger subscriptions and noted that 'those great English Societies sometimes receive larger contributions within a single week

[248] IWSLGA report for 1902. AA18427, NLI, p. 9.
[249] Ibid.

than our associations do within a year.'[250] There were indeed notable differences between the IWSLGA and the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies (NUWSS) central society, which was formed in 1897 as an umbrella organisation for all suffrage societies in the United Kingdom. As early as 1902, the NUWSS central society had 876 subscribers who paid £479 8s 6d in subscriptions.[251] In 1909 the IWSLGA had amassed £53 3s 6d in subscriptions while the NUWSS Central Society (which was now known as the London Society) had gained £1153 9s 0d in subscriptions as well as £565 12s 0d in general donations.[252] The IWSLGA's committee explained this difference in financial resources by arguing that 'Ireland is a poor country; and the number of our active sympathisers who possess independent fortunes of their own, is unhappily small.'[253] Despite this, the IWSLGA was still progressing.

The IWSLGA combined campaigning for women's suffrage with promoting women in local government. The Association remained in close contact with Helen Blackburn and began to connect regularly with Edith Palliser who was secretary of the NUWSS.[254] Yet the IWSLGA rejected Palliser's suggestion that it should divide into two bodies to deal with women's suffrage and local government work separately. Revealingly, the committee unanimously decided 'that this route would be most undesirable', suggesting a different approach to that pursued by the NUWSS.[255] Although the IWSLGA still chose to associate with the NUWSS, the latter body noted that the Irish association's focus

[250] IWSLGA report for 1909. AA18427, NLI, pp. 11-12.
[251] National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies Central Society report for 1902, vol 3. LSE Digital Library, [Digital facsimiles consulted: https://digital.library.lse.ac.uk/objects/lse:boc726cep] [Last Accessed, 26 September, 2019], pp. 23-31.
[252] London Society for Women's Suffrage report for 1909, vol 4. LSE Digital Library [Digital Facsimiles Consulted: https://digital.library.lse.ac.uk/objects/lse:ram396tan] [Last Accessed 26 September, 2019], pp. 18- 53.
[253] IWSLGA report for 1909. AA18427, NLI, pp. 11-12.
[254] Minute book, 6 January, 1898. DWSA/3, NAI.
[255] Ibid.

was on 'Women in Local Government with women's suffrage work' but that it acted 'in co-operation with the Union.'[256] For the committee, promoting women in local government was a gateway to involvement on a parliamentary level and it made sense to focus on both goals together, rather than splitting the organisation into two.

III. **Informal networks**

As the DWSA struggled to gain momentum for the movement, the members began to discuss other methods of bringing attention to their campaign. In January 1879 they freely discussed ways to influence members of Parliament but despite this 'no key definite conclusions were aimed at.'[257] They continued to rely on a combination of drawing room meetings, public meetings, placing the *Women's Suffrage Journal* in public reading rooms, and petitioning to promote the suffrage campaign. In January 1886, however, the DWSA deviated from this formula and the committee requested that Caroline McCarthy, the wife of Irish Nationalist and Home Rule MP Justin McCarthy, 'be asked by the secretaries to co-operate with the committee with a view of ascertaining the opinions of the Irish MPs with regard to women's suffrage.'[258] Yet again, the DWSA was relying on the use of their political connections and social circles to promote their campaign. This instance demonstrates how their political connections to powerful men, such as McCarthy, were vital to the tactics of the DWSA and emphasises their reliance on political men and informal political networks rather than mass agitation. Caroline McCarthy agreed to act as a liaison between the DWSA and Irish MPs, as well as building connections between suffrage and the Home Rule party. British campaign connections were largely with Liberal and some Conservative MPs.

[256] London Society for Women's Suffrage report for 1907, vol 4, LSE Digital Library, p. 3.
[257] Minute book, 15 January, 1879. DWSA/1, NAI.
[258] Minute book, 20 January, 1886. DWSA/2, NAI.

This tactic adopted by the DWSA had a long pedigree. Aristocratic women, such as Lady Margaret Sarah Dockrell, had often been permitted access into parts of the world of high politics through their relationships with influential political men. Lady Margaret Sarah Dockrell's husband was Maurice Dockrell, an Irish Unionist Alliance MP and she would subsequently go on to become a director and member of the board of Messrs Thomas Dockrell & Sons & Co. Ltd.[259] In addition to this she held other public roles, as noted earlier, which were obtained following the passing of the Local Government (Ireland Act) in 1898. K.D. Reynolds has found that unlike middle-class feminists, aristocratic women did not 'perceive the political system as a closed world from which they were excluded.'[260] Social events could be 'endowed' with political significance and it was 'at this interface between the social and the political that aristocratic women found a role.'[261] Using their high social status to compensate for exclusions based on their gender, was a way to infiltrate political spaces for women who wished to access and influence politics. In the case of the DWSA and its middle-class members, drawing room meetings offered social opportunities for members to speak openly on suffrage issues to like-minded supporters. While these meetings were private, they sometimes had high numbers of attendees with 100 attending a drawing room meeting organised by Reverend W.A. McDonald in February 1879.[262] This demonstrates the DWSA's use of informal influence and the domestic sphere as a political space.

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[259] Mary Sheehan, 'Dockrell, Margaret Sarah' in in James McGuire and James Quinn (eds), *Dictionary of Irish Biography*, (Cambridge, 2009), [http://dib.cambridge.org/viewReadPage.do?articleId=a2647] [Last Accessed, 17 September, 2020]; Pauric J. Dempsey and Shaun Boylan, 'Dockrell, Sir Maurice Edward' in James McGuire and James Quinn (eds), *Dictionary of Irish Biography*, (Cambridge, 2009), [http://dib.cambridge.org/viewReadPage.do?articleId=a2648] [Last Accessed, 17 September, 2020].
[260] K.D. Reynolds, *Aristocratic Women and Political Society in Victorian Britain* (Oxford, 1998), p. 154.
[261] Ibid, p. 154.
[262] *Freeman's Journal*, 1 Jan. 1879, p. 7.

Women often utilised their relationships with men to their advantage. Kathryn Gleadle has conducted an in-depth case study to the nature of these relationships through her examination of the family of the abolitionist Thomas Fowell Buxton. Gleadle surmised that as well as public campaigning, the family and the domestic site also provided a 'significant outlet of political activity' for women in this circle.[263] In regards to his career, Buxton referred to the critical influence of his female relatives such as his sister Anna, who refused 'to eat slave-produced sugar in their childhood', or his mother, who 'sowed the seeds' in his mind of the 'abhorrence' of slavery.'[264] These women had such an impact on Buxton that they influenced the way he saw slavery and his objection towards it. The politics that women demonstrated on the home could contribute significantly to the ways they could express their beliefs and desires to see change. Similarities can be also drawn in this case with the women of the Ladies' Land League. Anne Deane, the president of the LLL, was the cousin of John Dillon the Irish MP and member of the Land League. Deane, who was much older than Dillon, raised him following the death of his parents and was said to have certain influence over his ideas in politics. [265] Her relation to him also put her in connection with many notable Irish figures, such as Michael Davitt, which likely contributed to her being elected as president of the women's organisation. Deane was able to subvert the limitations placed upon her due to her gender through her familial connections.

As all these examples show, these informal social, personal or familial connections were sometimes vital for women who were severely limited in their abilities to cross the threshold into the political arena due to a lack of political rights, legal impediments and social and cultural norms. In the case of the DWSA, their petitioning campaigns provided them with an entry way into direct

[263] Gleadle, *Borderline Citizens,* p. 226
[264] As cited in Gleadle, *Borderline Citizens,* p. 228
[265] F.S.L Lyons, *John Dillon: A Biography* (London, 1968), p. 2.

political involvement and the lobbying of MPs served to enhance these campaigns rather than solely act as an alternative source of influence. The committee later showed their gratitude to Caroline McCarthy for 'her efforts in our cause with the members of the house of commons.'[266] McCarthy continued to carry this work on behalf of the DWSA throughout the year and promised to 'continue her valuable services with our Irish MPs.'[267] Through their social circles, the DWSA was able to make use of their connection to McCarthy and her position as a political wife to promote their own agenda. This also demonstrates how the DWSA acted similarly to other women's organisations such as the Anti-Slavery movement and the LLL. The DWSA's campaign utilised traditional ideals of "womanly" influence while also expanding into direct political action through the signing and organising of petitions, as will be examined in the next section.

The petitioning process

Petitioning, as seen in chapter one, was a form of political campaigning that was favoured by the Irish and British suffrage associations. Petitions allowed suffragists to express their discontent while publicising the movement by appealing for signatures from the public. Signing created a first level of commitment and an ongoing relationship between the signatory and the issue. The fact the DWSA often used a chairman to sign the petition on behalf of the meeting reflects the more formal approach, as well as the more open, numerously-signed petitions. Meetings in conjunction with petitions would form the basis of the DWSA's efforts to open up discussions on suffrage in Ireland. The DWSA followed clear instructions on petitioning as instructed by the central committee in the *WSJ*. The instructions given were very specific as they were instructed to copy the address from the journal and request that 'in the judgment of your petitioners the Parliamentary franchise should be extended to women

[266] Minute book 7 October, 1886. DWSA/2, NAI.
[267] Minute book, 3 December, 1886. DWSA/2, NAI.

who possess the qualifications which entitle men to vote, and who in all matters of local government have the right of voting.' [268] This demonstrated the very Anglo-centric focus of the *WSJ* which did not take into account the fact that Irish women did not share in their right to vote in local government. It is also revealing of the relationship between the DWSA and the main British movement, as despite the very different legal context in Ireland the Association followed the same model text.

Despite the DWSA having not formally been founded until 1876, suffrage petitioning existed in Ireland before this. Seventeen Irish women signed John Stuart Mill's first suffrage petition to Parliament in 1866 and in 1869 Dublin was listed as a branch of the National Society for Women's Suffrage.[269] Quinlan has also found evidence of petitions sent from Dublin in 1869.[270] In that year there were two petitions supporting the Married Women's Property Act submitted by inhabitants of Dublin with a total of 3,528 signatures.[271] A petition supporting the extension of Franchise to women was also submitted by inhabitants of Dublin with 3,164 signatures.[272] Another was submitted to Parliament in 1871 to remove the electoral disabilities of women, which had 155 signatures.[273] The SCPP reproduces the text and top three signatures of only a small proportion of petitions accepted by Parliament and the named signatories in this case were James Haughton a socialist reformer and philanthropist, Barbara Corlett, and Charlotte Matilda Blake Stoker, the mother of author Bram Stoker. She was a member of Statistical and Social Inquiry Society of Ireland and had been the first woman to address the society in 1863 when she read her paper 'on the need for state provision for the education of the deaf and dumb.' Haslam and Tod were

[268] *Women's Suffrage Journal,* 2 Jan. 1882, p. 161.
[269] Quinlan, 'The Nineteenth Century Irish Campaign', pp. 22-23.
[270] As cited in Ibid, p. 23.
[271] SCPP, *Reports* (1869), p. 898; SCPP, *Reports* (1869), p. 386.
[272] SCPP, *Reports* (1869), p. 859.
[273] SCPP, *Reports* (1871), app. 589.

also members, confirming the connections between suffragism and other reformist causes.[274] Petitioning had clearly been utilised before 1876, but it was not until the DWSA's foundation that petitioning became an integral and sustained part of suffrage campaigning in Ireland.

Generally, DWSA committee members collected petitions themselves but in January 1876 the committee decided to employ a paid canvasser, ideally a 'reliable man be paid a pound a week for four weeks to collect signatures', while in 1879 it was agreed that a 'suitable paid caretaker' be employed for collecting signatures 'as far as may appear desirable.'[275] In April 1879 the DWSA tried a different route by employing a 'young person' to collect petitions, at 5 shillings per 100 signatures, for a number of weeks.[276] A paid position such as this could have also created a certain incentive for fraud or forged signatures, as discussed in chapter 1, though there is no evidence of malfeasance in this case. The committee found their hopes for success dashed when the young canvasser only obtained 425 signatures and 15 petitions.[277] Quinlan has surmised that these instances of paid work suggest there was a 'paucity of voluntary resources.'[278] The fact that these occasions were an exception rather than the rule suggests, however, that it was the committee and their social networks who undertook the majority of petitioning.

To expand those networks, in 1878 the *WSJ* advertised where people in Ireland could procure petition forms if they wished to collect signatures to aid the cause. The journal provided the addresses of Anna Haslam and Rose McDowell for Dublin, Isabella Tod for Belfast, and Elizabeth Addey for Cork as

[274] Quinlan, *Genteel Revolutionaries,* p. 21.
[275] As cited in Quinlan, *Genteel Revolutionaries,* p. 123; Minute book, 15 January, 1879. DWSA/1, NAI.
[276] Minute book 28 April, 1879. DWSA/1, NAI.
[277] Ibid.
[278] Quinlan, *Genteel Revolutionaries,* p. 125.

the principal contacts.[279] The DWSA was at the centre of petitioning for suffrage at this time and an entry in the DWSA minute-book in 1879 refers to 'several ladies' handing in sheets of signatures for petitions.[280] The DWSA was a small movement in terms of the numbers of their members and they did not have the funding nor the manpower to collect signatures on the level of some committees in Britain. They can be credited however with having produced signatures on a regular year by year basis as seen in table 2.8 below.[281] Petitioning played an important role in the work of the DWSA and most committee meetings addressed the progress made on petitioning.

The DWSA regularly submitted petitions from the committee which was usually signed just by the chair or the secretaries Anna Haslam and Rose McDowell.[282] Anna Haslam also kept a record of suffrage petitions sent to the House of Commons and the House of Lords from Dublin and other counties between the years 1879 and 1889, as demonstrated in tables 2.8 and 2.9.[283] It is difficult to accurately ascertain how much involvement the DWSA had in the submission of these petitions. The SCPP reports record 10 petitions submitted to the House of Commons from the DWSA committee specifically.[284] The fact that Anna Haslam regularly recorded petitions sent from Dublin and other counties and that the DWSA were the main point of contact for collecting petition forms would suggest that they had a leading role in most, if not all, suffrage petitions sent from Ireland. Many petitions were submitted from the inhabitants of various counties as well as leading respectable women and men, suggesting that the DWSA was trying to organise the traditional petitions on behalf of a geographical

[279] *Women's Suffrage Journal,* 1 Apr. 1878, p. 50.
[280] Minute book, 4 April, 1876. DWSA/1, NAI.
[281] Quinlan, *Genteel Revolutionaries,* p. 123.
[282] SCPP, *Reports* (1878), p. 5.
[283] List of Petitions. DWSA/9, NAI.
[284] Data from SCPP, *Reports* (1878-1893).

community, rather than those explicitly from supporters of their campaign group, as will be examined further in this section.

Tables 2.8 and 2.9 offer a comparison between the total number of UK-wide petitions submitted and the total number of Dublin petitions as recorded in the SCPP reports, as well as the total number of petitions recorded by Haslam in the DWSA minute book. There are some disparities between the SCPP and minute book figures, because the SCPP only records petitions sent from the House of Commons and these figures represent the petitions submitted from Dublin specifically. While Haslam did mainly focus on Dublin petitions, she sometimes also noted petitions submitted by other counties and she also included petitions sent to the House of Lords for the years 1884 and 1885. It is also possible that Haslam did not record all the petitions submitted, as seen in table 2.9 when Haslam recorded only 2464 signatures from Dublin, compared to the 5565 recorded by the SCPP. Despite these disparities, it is still worth examining the minute book records as it provides a perspective on how the DWSA recorded their progress in comparison to the SCPP data. The numbers of petitions sent were only recorded by the DWSA from 1879 up to 1889; the reason for this is unknown as they did continue to petition, for example they submitted 17 petitions in 1890 with over 300 signatures, including MPs and householders.[285]

[285] Minute book, 26 February. 1890, DWSA/2 [NAI].

Table 2.8. Suffrage petitions submitted to Parliament, 1879-1889.[286]

Year	Total number of suffrage petitions submitted to Parliament based on the SCPP reports	Total number of petitions submitted to Parliament from Dublin based on the SCPP reports	Total number of petitions submitted to Parliament from Dublin and other counties as recorded in the DWSA minute book
1879	853	10	15
1880	258	6	6
1881	457	14	21
1882	540	10	31
1883	610	6	15
1884	686	30	92
1885	394	11	17
1886	450	12	27
1887	209	8	15
1888	289	4	11
1889	190	10	17
Total	**4,936**	**121**	**267**

[286] Data from SCPP, *Reports* (1879-89); List of Petitions. DWSA/9, NAI. Some years petitions were submitted to both the House of Lords and the House of Commons.

Table 2.9. Signatures submitted to Parliament, 1879-1889.[287]

Year	Total number of signatures submitted to Parliament based on the SCPP reports	Total number of signatures submitted to Parliament from Dublin based on the SCPP reports	Total number of signatures submitted to Parliament from Dublin and other counties as recorded in the DWSA minute book
1879	35,000	656	1006
1880	7698	276	364
1881	22,435	373	501
1882	15,905	168	763
1883	15,281	88	271
1884	36,748	5565	2464
1885	9365	191	267
1886	16,597	243	514
1887	7371	117	306
1888	6300	57	230
1889	5315	188	318
Total	**178,015**	**7,922**	**7,004**

This SCPP shows that petitions from Dublin accounted for 3 percent of total petitions submitted to Parliament and signatures from Dublin accounted for 5 percent of total signatures. This is quite low when compared on a national level with the United Kingdom, however, when compared with another Irish city such as Belfast, Dublin evidently submitted the largest number of signatures from Ireland on a year-by-year basis. Between 1879 and 1889, Belfast submitted a total of 15 petitions to Parliament and 1050 signatures.[288] Cork had even lower numbers, submitting 6 petitions and 131 signatures between 1879-1889.[289] The

[287] Ibid.
[288] Data from SCPP, *Reports* (1879-89).
[289] Ibid.

DWSA was, then, the most active suffrage branch in Ireland, with others relying on even smaller pools of supporters and possibly regularly sending petitions from the same people.

The petition list recorded by Anna Haslam provides additional information on where petitions came from and what groups submitted them. The petitions lists recorded the location the signatures came from, which were predominantly locations in Dublin and the name of those who collected the signatures, for example, in 1889 it was recorded that Anna Haslam had collected 16 signatures and Rose McDowell collected 21.[290] In addition to this, MPs submitted petitions, such as in 1879 when MPs Maurice Brooks, Colonel Taylor and Charles Stewart Parnell submitted suffrage petitions.[291] This information provides an insight into how petitions were spread across Dublin and the different forms of collective identity that might produce a petition. In just 1882, for example, graduates of Trinity College, Ladies connected with The Alexandra College Dublin; inhabitants of Bray, Kingstown, Lucan, Rathmines, Rathgar and Dublin city; and the ladies, exclusively, of Sligo and Louth all submitted suffrage petitions.[292] This speaks to the different community formations – institutional, local, and gendered – that lent authority or interest to petitioners' demands. While the city and towns of County Dublin predominated, in some years other counties submitted petitions, including Limerick, Enniscorthy, Clonmel, Carrick, Waterford, Mountmellick and Drogheda in 1884.[293]

This greater geographical reach of petitioning in 1884 reflects a notable spike in numbers, as many more petitions were submitted to both houses of Parliament that year. Harold Smith has noted that while suffrage bills were introduced almost every year, the campaign's best opportunity seemed to come

[290] List of Petitions. DWSA/9, NAI
[291] Ibid.
[292] Ibid.
[293] Ibid.

with the Liberal Government's 1884 Reform Bill.[294] Suffragists recognised the opportunities afforded by a Third Reform Act, as it would be easier to secure female franchise as an amendment to a larger revision of electoral law, rather than as a separate women's suffrage bill. In an attempt to make the amendment to the bill more acceptable, their amendment was a limited measure that 'would have enfranchised only about 100,000 women'. [295] The amendment was submitted by Liberal MP William Woodall who was connected to the Manchester suffrage society.[296] The DWSA's activities therefore responded to national agitation and the committee concentrated their efforts on petitioning in concert with parliamentary initiatives. It is vital to recognise how events in Parliament stimulated the way the DWSA conducted its campaign, with petitioning seen as the most effective way of conveying support for the amendment as it was the most direct way for women to voice their opinions to Parliament. Historian Sophia A. Van Wingerden has found that petitions to Parliament were a favourite of Lydia Becker's as they 'were encouraged as a means to disprove the conviction that women did not desire franchise.'[297]

The DWSA minute-book entries for 1884 reveal their increased efforts to see women included in the Third Reform Act. They supplemented meetings and petitions with other typical Victorian pressure tactics, such as deputations and letters to the press. In January 1884 the committee decided that the secretaries should write to the Irish Chief Secretary, George Trevelyan, in 1884 asking him to 'service a deputation to urge the claims of women householders to the franchise in any measure the government may introduce on the question.'[298] Rather than appealing just to Parliament through petitioning, the DWSA saw value in direct

[294] Harold L. Smith, *The British Women's Suffrage Campaign, 1866-1928* (London, 1998), p. 9.
[295] Ibid.
[296] Sophia A. Van Wingerden, *The Women's Suffrage Movement in Britain, 1866-1928* (London, 1999), p. 52.
[297] Ibid, p. 23.
[298] Minute book, 14 January, 1884. DWSA/1-DWSA/2, NAI.

appeals to other government ministers, such as Trevelyan. This method continued in March 1884 as the committee also agreed to send a memorial to the prime minister William Gladstone 'begging him to include women householders in the proposed franchise bill.' [299] To supplement these direct appeals, every year the DWSA submitted petitions specifically from women householders and put great effort into getting their signatures.[300]

The committee also turned to their own social circles for support as circulars were sent to 'friends' throughout the country asking that they write to their Borough and county members urging them to support Woodall's amendment. [301] They sent another circular to other 'friends of the movement', this time listing how Irish MPs voted on women's suffrage and requesting that they write to their members. Unfortunately, it is not possible to note how these MPs voted as the committee did not record this list in the minute book. The secretaries reported that it was met with good response.[302] The DWSA shared information they had on MPs with their social networks in order to extend their reach, through the hope that their supporters would contact their local MPs.

The DWSA also reached out to the press to gain more publicity for the campaign as secretaries wrote a paragraph for publication to submit to the newspapers and the committee agreed to make every possible effort to get as many signatures as possible.[303] In June, the secretaries reported that they had written to 54 newspapers in Leinster, Munster and Connaught and their letters appeared in half of those. [304] The committee also requested that as many petitions as possible be sent to the House of Lords and they sent 23 petitions with a total of

[299] Minute book, 12 March, 1884. DWSA/2, NAI.
[300] Minute book, 11 March. 1885. DWSA/1, NAI; List of petitions. DWSA/9, NAI.
[301] Minute book, 12 March, 1884. DWSA/2, NAI.
[302] Minute book, 26 June, 1884, DWSA/2; List of petitions, DWSA/9, NAI
[303] Minute book, 12 March, 1884. DWSA/2, NAI.
[304] Minute book, 26 June, 1884. DWSA/2, NAI.

220 signatures.[305] The amendment, however, was defeated following Gladstone's strong opposition to it.[306] This was one of the DWSA's most active years as they fully utilised methods such as petitioning and writing directly to MPs to support the suffrage amendment. Their statistics on petitioning show how far they expended their efforts on this campaign.

Public meetings

One of the DWSA's chief campaign methods was to organise public meetings. Rosemary Cullen Owens has rightly argued that the committee emphasised 'the educational role of the society.' Therefore, organising regular meetings was paramount to the progression of their cause.[307] Public meetings were held less frequently than private drawing room and committee meetings, probably owing to the high cost to organise an event and relatively select numbers attending. Meetings were held across Ireland by the other suffrage branches earlier mentioned and not just in Dublin. A meeting was held in Belfast under the auspices of the NIWSS in 1875 and was reported to be 'largely attended.' [308] Isabella Tod attended and spoke at meetings that year in Downpatrick and Enniskillen.[309] Meetings were also organised in Cork and Limerick before the formation of the DWSA, presumably by Tod who attended both.[310] Suffrage meetings were predominantly held in Dublin, suggesting that the DWSA was acting as a National organisation for suffrage in Ireland.

Public meetings, notably, were not held between the years 1886 and 1896 owing to what the committee described as 'the present condition of political controversy in Ireland, as well as other causes.'[311] This was a reference to the

[305] Minute book, 26 June, 1884, DWSA/2; List of petitions, DWSA/9, NAI
[306] Smith, *The British Women's Suffrage Campaign,* p. 9.
[307] Owens, *A social History of Women*, p. 10.
[308] *Women's Suffrage Journal,* 1 Sep. 1875, p. 31.
[309] Ibid.
[310] *Women's Suffrage Journal,* 1 Jun. 1874, p. 87.
[311] IWSLGA report for 1896. AA18427, NLI, p. 5.

issue of Home Rule, the first bill of which was introduced in 1886 and would dominate Irish politics for many years. Anna Haslam was 'vehemently opposed' to Home Rule, as were many British suffragists such as Millicent Garrett Fawcett.[312] Haslam supported the Union and was a member of the Rathmines Unionist Society. Despite this, she still worked alongside Home Rule party supporters and Carmel Quinlan has found that there was no evidence of contention on constitutional questions spilling into the movement directly.[313] This gap in public meetings however appeared to have an effect on their ability to collect funds as it was also noted in their report for 1896 that since their last public meeting the committee had not solicited 'heavy contributions from their supporters; and both their income and expenditure during the intervening years have been under five pounds.'[314] Not having public meetings additionally meant a drop in promoting the suffrage cause and as a result, a lack of exposure in the press. It is likely that the issue of Home Rule also took a lot of attention and focus away from extending Franchise to women as it was unlikely to be held as a matter of equal importance.

The key elements to organising a meeting included finding an appropriate venue, printing advertisements and pamphlets, readying petitions to be signed and recruiting speakers. Often, the organisers secured an influential gentleman, such as an Irish MP, alongside a female speaker. Generally, at the closing of a meeting, a resolution was passed by committee members to sign a petition to Parliament. These were, however, usually signed on behalf of all attendees by the chairman as evidenced during a meeting in 1886 when it was moved by Abraham Shackleton, a member of the DWSA, that the chairman would sign on behalf of the meeting and send petitions to both Houses of

[312] Quinlan, *Genteel Revolutionaries,* p.162.
[313] Ibid, pp. 132-133.
[314] IWSLGA report for 1896. AA18427, NLI, p. 6.

Parliament.[315] There is also further evidence of this in the petition list of the DWSA minute book.[316] The reason for this is not stipulated but it certainly reflects a collectivist approach, relying on the respectability of the meeting and the chairman as representative rather than seeking to demonstrate the scale and range of popular support. Alternatively, the committee might have sent two petitions, one signed by a representative, such as the chairman, as well as another signed by other signatories. Most mass movements at this time 'urged petitions to be "numerous and numerously signed", demonstrating support from various places and groups'.[317] Rather than signing a singular petition, sending two petitions created the effect of providing 'numbers' in an attempt to impress parliament and showcase the widespread support for suffrage.

Exposure in the press was also a useful method to publicise a DWSA meeting. When a meeting was arranged, advertisements were primarily published in the *WSJ, Freeman's Journal* and *Cork Examiner,* as well as in others. The DWSA also provided copies of the *WSJ* to subscribers of 10 shillings and upwards and to various reading rooms and newsrooms around the country.[318] John Francis Meagher MP was the founder of the *Cork Examiner* and John Gray MP was proprietor of the *Freeman's Journal* and were supporters of suffrage.[319] Both papers often featured information on the suffrage movement in their publications and the *Freeman's Journal* printed suffrage news on the front of its pages on numerous occasions. The DWSA relied on the support of influential men such as these and used these relationships to their advantage

Printing was vital in arranging meetings and provided publicity for the cause. In July 1877 the committee spent £11 in total on campaign literature such

[315] *Women's Suffrage Journal,* 1 Dec. 1886, p. 166.
[316] List of petitions. DWSA/9, NAI.
[317] Huzzey and Miller, 'Petitions, Parliament and Political Culture', p. 144.
[318] Minute book, 19 January, 1880. DWSA/2, NAI.
[319] Quinlan, *Genteel Revolutionaries,* p. 21.

as advertisements and pamphlets.[320] To publicise a meeting in August 1881, the DWSA ordered that '750 cards and 1000 fly leaves' be printed and distributed as well as the usual advertisements.[321] In 1877 the DWSA was actually faced with a deficit of 5 pounds and 12 shillings after spending 18 pounds and 14 shillings on stewards, advertising and printing.[322] They were unable to pay the printing bill owed to Alfred Webb, but fortunately he was a devoted supporter of the suffrage movement and did not press them for payment, again demonstrating the importance of connections with the middle classes for the sustainability for the organisation.[323]

As mentioned earlier an important component of these assemblies was to request 'influential gentleman to speak at or be present at the meetings.'[324] In July 1878 a meeting was held to promote the extension of the franchise to women ratepayers and the DWSA booked the Leinster Hall which was a large concert hall based in Dublin. The committee decided to ask Reverend Samuel Haughton to preside over the meeting. [325] Haughton was a prolific scientific author in geology and other subjects and took a deep interest in education.[326] This choice on speaker, however, was not to the DWSA's benefit on this occasion as Haughton referred to himself as 'not the right man in the right place'.[327] Haughton evidently was not thoroughly researched in regards to his standing on the suffrage issue and this would not have benefitted the DWSA if the aim of the meeting was to convince attendees that suffrage was a viable cause worth supporting. The Irish Nationalist newspaper the *Nation* later reported negatively on his presence at the meeting as while 'humorous as usual' he did not please the

[320] Minute book, 11 July, 1877. DWSA/1, NAI.
[321] Minute book, 4 August, 1881. DWSA/1, NAI.
[322] Minute book, 11 July, 1877. DWSA/1, NAI.
[323] Ibid.
[324] Minute book, 3 January, 1885. DWSA/1, NAI.
[325] Minute book, 16 July, 1878. DWSA/1, NAI.
[326] W.J.E. Jessop, 'Samuel Haughton: A Victorian polymath', *Hermathena* 116 (1973), p. 26.
[327] *Freeman's Journal,* 21 Aug. 1878, p. 3

'ladies' on this occasion.[328] Haughton did agree that the claim to suffrage was just but 'he was decidedly of opinion that its concession would not be advantageous to women.' [329] The article noted that though the meeting was 'pretty "successful" as things go' it was doubtful that it would have much practical result.[330] This demonstrates that the DWSA's focus on securing an authoritative speaker, such as Haughton, resulted in the committee failing to ensure his views on suffrage were actually supportive.

Other than Haughton, other prominent men and women were present at the meeting as the honorary secretaries ensured to invite several 'ladies and gentlemen'. [331] It is unclear whether these invitees were friends of the movement or those they were hoping to convert, but it more likely the former. Attendees included Liberal MP Charles Cameron and Eliza Mary King, the New Zealand-born suffrage activist who campaigned alongside Josephine Butler against the CD Acts. She provided the first address to the meeting and Isabella Tod also spoke to the audience.[332] Unfortunately, however, many prominent members of the British Association could not attend, these included Helen Taylor, Frances Power Cobbe, Lydia Becker and Jacob Bright. They were said to have been called away on business with the National Library in London. Unfortunately, further details on their involvement with the library were not provided. [333] This appears to indicate that while the DWSA was part of the British suffrage movement, the DWSA was not always a priority in the eyes of the NSWS's central committee.

Meetings offered a space for like-minded individuals to discuss issues of women's rights but it is questionable how far they went in converting those who did not already support the cause. The aforementioned 1878 meeting was

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[328] *Nation,* 24 Aug. 1878, p. 1.
[329] Ibid.
[330] Ibid.
[331] Minute book, 16 July, 1878. DWSA/1, NAI.
[332] *Women's Suffrage Journal,* 2 Sep. 1878, p. 155.
[333] *Freeman's Journal,* 21 Aug. 1878, p. 3, *Women's Suffrage Journal,* 2 Sep. 1878, p. 155.

reported to have a 'very large audience', though no number was given as was a common occurrence in reports of meetings.[334] The record of public meetings in the *WSJ* also often referenced crowds as 'well attended' or 'largely attended.'[335] The DWSA, like other suffrage societies, had a clear aim of presenting their events as successful with the hope of encouraging more support by emphasising existing levels of success. Unfortunately, the numbers of people who attended DWSA public meetings were not often recorded. A meeting held in 1878 had 50 attendees present and for a meeting in 1895, 100 people who had been involved in collecting petitions were invited and when 80 of those invited attended this was reported as successful.[336] However, it is important to put it into context and consider the difficulties the DWSA had with attracting attention and support from the public. Perhaps by the DWSA's standards, having this many attend a meeting was indeed a success in its eyes, particularly when meetings were not held on a regular basis. It is unclear, however, whether those in attendance were all those from the member's personal social circles or if any outsiders were ever invited.

This evidence would suggest that the DWSA were, as Rosemary Cullen Owens argued, simply preaching to the converted in its early years.[337] This was not always the case however as DWSA meetings were not always met with positivity. In 1877 the committee blamed the lack of success of their recent meeting on various causes but 'especially the determined hostility of a small knot of disturbers.'[338] This provides evidence of detractors of suffrage in Dublin, which argues against the theory that the DWSA preached to the converted. It is true that their membership came from similar social and religious backgrounds, but they

[334] *Women's Suffrage Journal,* 2 Sep. 1878, p. 155.
[335] *Women's Suffrage Journal,* 1 Jan. 1884, pp. 8-10, *Women's Suffrage Journal,* 1 Jun. 1887, pp. 55-66.
[336] Minute book, 13 February, 1878. DWSA/1; Minute book, 10 October, 1894, 13 February, 1895. DWSA3, NAI.
[337] Owens, *Smashing Times,* p. 220.
[338] Minute book, 11 July, 1877. DWSA/1, NAI.

did not always receive a positive reception from attendees at their meetings. The *WSJ* reported that in regards to attendance 'ladies and gentlemen in nearly equal proportions occupied pretty fully the lower part of the hall.' [339] A considerable number of attendees were also of the 'coarser type' and 'indulged in interruptions from time to time, so much so that the Lord Mayor had repeatedly to request the interrupter to conduct themselves properly.'[340] The *Nation* reported that the men were producing 'senseless noises' as well as 'rude and sarcastic observations' to give the demonstration a 'rowdy' character. The *Nation* was 'ashamed to say' that the ladies who spoke, which included Isabella Tod and Helena P. Downing, the socialist suffragist who was the niece of McCarthy Downing MP for County Cork, had to 'appeal in vain' to the 'chivalry of the audience' in order to gain a hearing.[341] The paper also negatively reported, perhaps influenced by the chaos of proceedings, that while their speeches were interesting they were not 'very convincing deliverances'.[342] Disruptive incidents such as this are an indicator of the adversity the DWSA was occasionally subjected to and that their meetings did not always consist of supporters of the movement. Negative coverage in the press, as a result of disruptions, would have had an undesired effect on their efforts to rouse support from those in the public who had not yet been convinced suffrage was worthy of supporting.

The DWSA, like other suffrage societies, aimed to gather a large audience by inviting a woman who was well known and would draw crowds, though drawing room meetings were reserved for supporters of the movement. These meetings are further indication of the organisational patterns of the DWSA through their meetings and arranging for a variety of well-known speakers. The result of which saw the suffrage movement in Ireland kept in the public eye

[339] *Women's Suffrage Journal,* 1 May. 1877, p. 76.
[340] Ibid.
[341] *Nation,* 14 Apr. 1877, p. 1.
[342] Ibid.

through the press reports about public meetings and petitions. One example included Lydia Shackleton the famous botanist, artist and teacher, who was recorded as having attended a meeting on 11 July 1877.[343] Mrs Mary Ashton Dilke the suffragist and member of the London Society also spoke at a couple of meetings in February 1885.[344] In October 1886 the committee decided to invite Laura Ormiston Chant to attend a meeting in the Mansion House, Dublin. Chant was best known for 'her public advocacy of the causes of women's suffrage, temperance and social purity.'[345] Chant was a very popular public speaker and prolific writer and composer and published many pamphlets on social purity, temperance and poor law. The meeting was recorded as a success by the *WSJ*, with Chant giving a moving speech on the desire of women to rid themselves of their 'shackles' and that they, like men, took interest in various movements for the benefit of mankind.[346] Again it is unclear what criteria was used to deem this a successful meeting. Perhaps it was due to the presence of such a popular and well-known activist. This tells us how important it was to maintain relations with prominent figures in the movement and they were the prime drawing card for attracting attendees.

Women householders, Local Government the Municipal Franchise

A notable source of contention for the suffrage movement, prior to 1898, was the fact that women householders and rate payers in Ireland did not have the right to vote in local elections, despite owning or occupying properties. Women also were not permitted to act as Poor Law Guardians until 1896. This presented Irish suffragists with a particular set of challenges – since they were also campaigning for a right already enjoyed in Britain and they did not enjoy the status of British

[343] Minute book, 11 July, 1877. DWSA1, NAI.
[344] Minute book, 3 January, 1885. DWSA/2, NAI,
[345] Phillipa Levine, 'Laura Ormiston Chant' in H.C.G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (eds.), *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 2008). [https://doi-org.ezphost.dur.ac.uk/10.1093/ref:odnb/49196] [Last Accessed, 10 September, 2017].
[346] *Women's Suffrage Journal*, 1 Dec. 1886, p. 166.

women electors within local government. The passing of the Catholic Emancipation Act of 1829 and the Reform Acts of 1832, 1868 and 1884 allowed for the enfranchisement of male urban and rural workers. The parliamentary vote however came with major disabilities, as 'it was primarily property-based rather than person-based, leaving significant levels of the population without a vote' and in addition to this 'all women, irrespective of whether or not they fulfilled the property qualifications, were excluded.'[347] This was an added difficulty for female ratepayers, who were still excluded despite owning properties, as a result of their gender. As evidenced in the DWSA minute book and the *WSJ*, this would be a driving factor in the spread of the suffrage movement within the country.

The DWSA argued that women attaining the right to act as Poor Law Guardians and to vote in local elections was 'essential' if women were 'on the one hand to gain experience in public affairs, while simultaneously proving the value of their contribution.'[348] The DWSA's focus also remained on the parliamentary franchise, even referring to it as 'larger and more important' than the Irish Municipal Women's Franchise Bill, which William Johnson the Liberal-Labour MP failed to introduce in 1897.[349] They did however continue to campaign and support proposed bills to allow women to sit as Poor Law Guardians. In July 1895 the committee proposed that a letter be forwarded to the Irish medical association to suggest that if they were to draw up reforms 'for the importance of our poor law system for the local government board' that they would ensure to include a proposal to allow women be elected as Poor Law Guardians.[350] There was value in obtaining the right to sit as a Guardian and to vote in local elections as this would allow women to demonstrate their political abilities and competence to vote in parliamentary elections.

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[347] Owens, *A Social History of Women*, p. 3.
[348] Ibid, p. 10.
[349] IWSLGA report for 1897. AA18427, NLI, p. 3.
[350] Minute book, 8 July, 1895. DWSA/3, NAI,

The DWSA chose on numerous occasions to prioritise petitioning by women householders, demonstrating the support of those who would benefit from an extension of the franchise.[351] In 1882 the *WSJ* indicated that it was 'highly desirable that women householders should sign a special petition.' The wording was the same as a normal petition, except the signatures belonged solely to 'women ratepayers.'[352] This strategy was utilised by the DWSA in March 1885 when the committee had forwarded 'several' petitions specifically from Irish women householders, and nearly all 'our friends here have done all in their power in the collection of such signatures.' [353] The DWSA had expended that much effort into getting these signatures for the 1885 petition, that when they were instructed to get more they were forced 'from adopting the suggested course, as the same persons are not as likely to petition thrice in any one session for the same object.'[354] The prioritisation of appealing to women householders emphasised the respectability of the suffrage campaign and how the women involved came from high qualifications as property owners. This resulted in further alienation of the working-classes and emphasised the exclusive character and limited appeal of the DWSA. They notably did not seek universal suffrage for everyone, which would include men and women who were of lower class and did not own properties. For this reason, it is unsurprising that the movement did not receive support from working-class men or women.

The issues surrounding women householders had two different meanings for the Irish and English branches. Not only did Irish women seek to have municipal rights equal to men but also equal to their English counterparts, the women ratepayers who were able to vote in local government elections and hold local office across the Irish Sea. The fact that that English women had municipal

[351] Minute book, 11 March. 1885. DWSA/1, NAI; List of petitions. DWSA/9, NAI.
[352] *Women's Suffrage Journal,* 2 Oct. 1882, p. 146.
[353] Minute book, 11 March. 1885. DWSA/1, NAI.
[354] Ibid.

rights further aided Irishwomen's arguments as Isabella Tod, in 1886, re-emphasised the 'senseless' differences that existed in England and Ireland in regards to municipal franchise, and how Irish women had suffered as a result.[355] This was a notable difference that existed between Irish and English suffragists. This discrepancy between the two had been discussed as early as 1878 when during parliamentary debates on the Municipal Franchise (Ireland) Bill, Major Purcell O'Gorman, an Irish Nationalist MP, questioned why Irish women were deemed 'less fitted for the responsibilities attaching to franchise than their English sisters?' He felt they were as equally devoted to the political interests of their country as their English sisters and he believed his 'Irish sisters' were equally as capable of exercising franchise.[356] This was a contentious issue for Irish women who wished to have the same rights as their fellow suffragists in Britain.

The Central Committee published statistics on Irishwomen householders in the *WSJ.* This article appeared to have the double intention of demonstrating why women should be allowed to vote in local elections, while also reassuring the male voting population that women would not take over the electorate with their numbers. In 1878 the journal reported that there were '4,127 women landowners (of one acre and up-wards) in Ireland, or one to every seven men landowners.' The *WSJ* calculated that the women 'to be enfranchised by this Bill would be in the proportion of one to seven of the existing electorate throughout the country.'[357] In another article in order to show how many women landowners resided in Ireland, it was noted that there were 1,000 women landowners in Munster, 1,454 in Ulster, 1,244 in Leinster and only 425 in Connaught.[358] The article revealed that in comparison to the women, 28,891 men in the country were landowners. A different article by the *WSJ* also stipulated that if Irish women

[355] *Women's Suffrage Journal*, 1 Mar. 1886, p. 38.
[356] *Women's Suffrage Journal*, 1 Apr. 1878, p. 51.
[357] Ibid, p. 50.
[358] *Women's Suffrage Journal*, 1 Nov. 1876, p. 2.

were to be enfranchised they would be in the proportion of one to seven of the existing electorate throughout the country.[359] Despite the large differences in numbers, this still did not offer valid reason as to why women could not vote, for any reason other than their sex. In addition to this, the numerical disparities might reassure anxious men that female enfranchisement would not be so dramatic as to "swamp" the electorate.

The suffragists used these findings to their advantage, by pointing out the injustices that were being committed by preventing these women from voting. The *WSJ* questioned 'by what justice can one-eighth of the landowners of the country be excluded from representation?' and claimed that these women were 'responsible persons' due to the fact that they owned their own land. [360] The aim of these articles was to show how women constituted a notable number of householders in the country and that the opinions of a large chunk of the country were being silenced by not allowing them to vote in elections. This also made the traditional argument that property should be represented to make a case for the removal of gender discrimination. This reiterates and emphasises the idea of respectability and those who were more deserving of parliamentary franchise than others.

British suffragists expressions of sympathy and support often revealed a certain level of ignorance about the Irish suffrage campaign. In 1878 English suffragist, Anna Perrier, wrote to the *WSJ's* editor to express her frustration about the Irish campaign. Perrier certainly conveyed support but simultaneously displayed a certain level of ignorance as she asked 'would it not be well, then, if the women of Ireland were to petition Parliament' to pass the Municipal Franchise bill.[361] Perrier seemed to be unaware of the fact that the DWSA were

[359] *Women's Suffrage Journal*, 1 Apr. 1878, p. 51.
[360] *Women's Suffrage Journal*, 1 Nov. 1876, p. 2.
[361] *Women's Suffrage Journal*, 1 Oct. 1878, pp. 171-172.

petitioning regularly as she also criticised the DWSA for 'laying claim to Parliamentary suffrage, while apparently content to remain without the municipal' which was putting Irish women in a worse condition as regards to their citizenship than their 'English sisters.' [362] The language used by Perrier here is demonstrative of the complicated relationship between Irish and English suffragists. Perrier calls them their 'sisters' but also seems to lay the blame with them for their inability to gain the Municipal Franchise. This was a failure on the part of Perrier to understand that the DWSA struggled in its early years to gain tract for the suffrage movement in Ireland and had expended much of their efforts in collecting signatures solely from women householders.

Irish suffragists sought and at times secured the support of local bodies, the very bodies they wished to be able to elect or sit on. In 1882 the South Dublin Poor Law Union gave its full support to the election of women onto the Board of Guardians and 'petitioned Parliament in favour of the removal of the restriction which at present prevents women, duly qualified as ratepayers, from being elected in Ireland.'[363] Abraham Shackleton, a member of the Board of Guardians and of the DWSA, admitted that his early concerns about women had been disproven and 'now he had no longer any doubt that their management would be very proper for the welfare of the poor and the benefit of the ratepayers.' The reason why he changed his opinion was due 'to the experience of England, where each year more ladies were becoming guardians.'[364] Enlisting the explicit support from Poor Law Unions, such as the South Dublin Union, which the *WSJ* referred to as 'the largest and most influential-in the sister Island', provided publicity and authority for the campaign. [365]

[362] Ibid.
[363] *Women's Suffrage Journal,* 1 Jul. 1882, p. 102.
[364] Ibid.
[365] Ibid.

To justify granting women political rights, suffrage campaigners reinforced conservative gender stereotypes by suggesting women were best suited to caretaking roles. Isabella Tod used such rhetoric on multiple occasions when discussing the Municipal Franchise and in July 1881 during the National Society for Women's Suffrage general meeting in the Westminster Palace Hotel, she claimed that women and the clergy were 'exactly those who knew the condition and wants of the poor best.'[366] She could not understand why Irish women, and the clergy, who were also excluded, were not seen as suitable to carry this responsibility. This stems from the popular rhetoric of classifying women as the caregivers of society, the fact that she groups women alongside the clergy is a striking example of this attitude that existed towards women. Campaigners, like Tod, sought to claim rights for women on the basis of traditional gender ideals, rather than overthrowing them.

Such gender stereotypes were further highlighted in a debate in 1898 regarding an amendment to the Local Government (Ireland) Bill to allow for the election of two councillors in each district, which was after women were granted the right to sit as guardians in 1896. During the debate, William Johnson the Liberal-Labour MP, read a letter from Ishbel Maria Gordon, countess of Aberdeen and president of the Aberdeen Women's Local Government Society. In this letter she stated that she had received letters from Ireland 'in which it is stated that the electors would desire to elect men to represent them on questions of politics and religion, but would elect women to see to the sick poor.'[367] This clearly established the traditional view that women were best suited to make decisions on matters relating to the sick and vulnerable of society. Jane Rendall has argued that 'few feminists were to criticize the assumption that the married woman's first responsibility was to the care of her family' and often relied on this

[366] *Women's Suffrage Journal*, 1 Aug. 1881, p. 122.
[367] *House of Commons Debates, 3rd Series* 16, cc. 1103-1104, 12 May 1898.

rhetoric when arguing their case for parliamentary emancipation.[368] Indeed, many suffragists argued that being mothers and wives accorded them the necessary knowledge needed to vote in elections, and in the case of Ireland in particular, sit on a Board of Guardians.

These gender stereotypes also afforded suffragists support from members of the religious community, such as Presbyterian Clergymen who often lent their support to women's suffrage. For example, in 1881 an 'influentially-signed memorial from more than 150 members of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Ireland was presented to Mr. Gladstone in the beginning of August' and the petitioners claimed that 'the enfranchisement of women is just in itself, and will be a great advantage to the country at large; and they are of opinion that in Ireland, in particular, it will add to the social forces on the side of peace and order.'[369] Clearly, perpetuating traditional gendered ideals of women as caregivers was beneficial for suffrage campaigners.

Maternalistic arguments were deployed by suffragists to defend a woman's place in important authoritative roles in society. Isabella Tod pointed out that for years, women spent much of their 'leisure time', taking care of the 'the sick, the ignorant, the fallen, and the weak' but that their care could only go so far, and to contribute more to society, they must be given the right to vote and have 'a direct influence on public affairs.'[370] Women could use their subordinate roles as caregivers in order to transgress the societal boundaries that prevented them from being involved in political decision making. Tod claimed that their experience in housekeeping would give them the knowledge needed to run a workhouse and to attend to the 'care of the sick, of the old, of the children, and the training of girls to earn their bread.'[371] She was careful not to paint these

[368] Rendall, *Women's Politics, 1800-1914,* p. 15.
[369] *Women's Suffrage Journal,* 1 Sep. 1884, p. 212.
[370] *Women's Suffrage Journal,* 1 Aug. 1881, p. 122.
[371] *Women's Suffrage Journal,* 1 Mar. 1886, p. 38.

women simply in the domestic state as also assured her audience that women took just as much interest in current affairs as the men did, in matters relating to religion, politics, finance, relations between nations and in all these cases 'women had a duty' to be involved.[372] Based on this rhetoric deployed by Tod, it is evident that a fine balance had to be struck between presenting women in their domestic and political roles. Suffragist campaign strategies relied on a combination of both and suffragists like Tod made conservative claims regarding women's traditional role to support feminist arguments regarding their right to vote

It is necessary to note that, even after women gained the right to act as Poor Law Guardians in 1896 and the right to vote in local elections in 1898, the IWSLGA continued to rely on and utilise maternalist arguments in order to promote women into local government positions. In some ways, the rhetoric of the IWSLGA was in keeping with the tradition of 'women's mission' common to earlier women's political activism. Yet previously this was used to justify women's political participation in the public sphere under moral or religious activity; now it was being used to highlight the expertise and qualifications of women for positions in local government and in administrative roles. Similarly in the UK, Sophia Lonsdale, a member of the Lichfield board in Warwickshire, referred to women guardians as 'strong, wise, far-seeing and withal benevolent, tender-hearted women.'[373] Lonsdale spoke on behalf of her 'friends' by emphasising that the women who became guardians before December 1894 were 'well qualified by education and ability to hold the position.'[374] Women's roles expanded from, not in absolute opposition to, traditional expectations of maternal virtues and the select few who succeed in being voted in local government roles were given independence and an ability to voice their opinions

[372] Ibid.
[373] Sophia Lonsdale, 'Women as Poor Law Guardians', *Charity Organisation Review,* 12:142 (1896), p. 464.
[374] Ibid.

in the way local politics were run. The IWSLGA committee strongly believed that the idea that a man could adequately supervise the dietary, clothing, nursing and children's departments without the aid of 'competent' and experienced women was 'too preposterous to be entertained by any intelligent person who understands the working of the system.'[375] In 1903 the committee passed a resolution that 'in the interest of our destitute poor and more especially of the women and children' that an 'adequate number' of 'capable' women inspectors had to be appointed to assist in the inspection of workhouses throughout Ireland.[376] Women claimed their role in public policy on the basis of stereotypical gender roles and not by denying them.

The IWSLGA did not only rely on traditional concepts of a woman's role in society but also conservative, class-based rhetoric as middle-class women were consistently championed as suitably educated to work in local politics. In 1902, the IWSLGA published an article entitled 'Why Women are Needed as Poor Law Guardians' and it appealed to the 'oversight of experienced, practical women', as the 'workhouse is a large and complex household.' [377] This was the rhetoric which the IWSLGA had become accustomed to exploiting. The IWSLGA believed that these women were more suitable to aid in the running of the Poor Law as 'the children, more especially require vigilant, motherly care in their bringing up, whether in the workhouse, in cottage homes; or boarded out.' [378] Before local enfranchisement, middle-class women had long been involved in philanthropy as they 'developed an enduring tradition of establishing voluntary agencies and societies which catered for the needs of the destitute of their own sex and for children.'[379] Their history in philanthropy was utilised by nineteenth-century suffragists who argued that the 'vote should be given to middle-class women

[375] *Kerry Evening Post,* 15 Mar. 1905, p. 4.
[376] Minute book, 7 May, 1903. DWSA/5, NAI
[377] *Munster Express,* 24 May. 1902, p. 7.
[378] Ibid.
[379] Luddy, *Women and Philanthropy*, p. 9.

who, through their philanthropic activism, had proved they "deserved" it.'[380] This form of 'conservative feminism' in the IWSLGA's campaign, sought to deliver social authority to women who they regarded as 'deserving'. The IWSLGA championed middle-class women as they had, in their words, spent their lives learning the 'matters of household management, and more particularly in the dietary, the clothing, and the nursing departments; and because they have usually more leisure to look after those departments, and see that they are both efficiently and economically worked.' [381] This again emphasises the middle-class character of the IWSLGA, as well as demonstrating how women utilised their work in philanthropy to defend their involvement in public roles.

These ideals, promoted by the IWSLGA, were also responded to positively in the press. An article on the IWSLGA in the *Nationalist and Leinster Times* reported that women taking part in caring for the poor and 'the bringing up of destitute children is a healthy sign of the times and cannot fail to have a good effect on workhouse management and the system of poor relief.' [382] The author of the article claimed that social work was 'one for which women's tact and sympathy eminently fits her.'[383] Similar sentiments were expressed in an article in the *Irish examiner* which claimed women could make their surroundings 'brighter and happier' and that 'corruption' would 'speedily disappear under the scrutiny and supervision of a vigilant female eye' as women were seen as superior in workhouse and hospital management.[384] The IWSLGA would consistently rely on such gender stereotyping to progress their movement and benefitted from this idea in terms of inspiring women to join their local Board of Guardians and allowing the public to become comfortable with women in public spaces.

[380] IWSLGA report for 1889, p. 3, in ibid, p. 213.
[381] *Munster Express,* 24 May. 1902, p. 7.
[382] *Nationalist and Leinster Times*, 8 Sept. 1900, p. 4.
[383] Ibid.
[384] Ibid.

Changing campaign methods

Irish suffragists saw local government as another route to achieve women's suffrage. These forms of local politics allowed women to exercise their civic duties and provided a stepping stone to parliamentary suffrage. Martin Pugh has found that women entering local authorities actually 'blurred the distinction' between municipal and parliamentary franchise and ultimately diminished 'the novelty in the idea of a parliamentary vote for women.'[385] The expansion of women in local government greatly benefitted the suffrage movement. As part of the campaign post 1896, the IWSLGA continued to use well-tried methods such as organising drawing-room and public meetings, sending petitions to the Commons and letters to parliamentary representatives, heads of public departments and to the press as well as the 'distribution of appropriate literature.' [386]

Key to the campaign was an emphasis on 'education' as the foundation for further action. For example, all subscribers of 1s and upwards received all publications issued by the Association.[387] In 1905 the committee sent 2,000 copies of an address given by Thomas Haslam to all members of both Irish and English suffrage societies and as well as this, copies were sent to Irish MPs, the leading newspapers and heads of 'leading schools and colleges.'[388] In September 1897, the committee also published between 1000-2000 educational pamphlets on 'Suggestions for Intending Women Workers Under the Local Government Act' and copies of these pamphlets were sent to newspapers for publishing.[389] This pamphlet was divided into sections under 'Electors', 'Registration of Electors', and 'Poor Law Guardians and District Councillors.'[390] The IWSLGA went to great

[385] Pugh, *March of the Women,* p. 78.
[386] IWSLGA report for 1904. AA18427, NLI, p. 1.
[387] Ibid.
[388] Minute book, 12 January, 1902. DWSA/5 NAI.
[389] IWSLGA report for 1897. AA18427, NLI, p. 9.
[390] IWSLGA, *Suggestions for Intending Women Workers*, P 790 (11), NLI, p. 1.

efforts to disperse educational documents while also publicising their organisation and the work they were doing.

While most of the methods employed by the IWSLGA were not new, having been utilised by its predecessor, the intensity of the campaign was at a different level. The IWSLGA decided to hold more drawing room meetings and in 1898 agreed to meet on the first Tuesday of the month, but by 1905 this decision was changed to meet quarterly instead.[391] Whereas the DWSA held, on average, only three meetings a year between 1876 to 1895, this trebled after 1896.[392] In addition, the IWSLGA organised public meetings that had a new focus on local government as well as suffrage. For example, in 1902 a meeting was held by the IWSLGA to promote the return of women Poor Law Guardians at the midsummer elections. The committee report for the year and the *Irish Times* reported the meeting as well attended.[393] The meeting was chaired by Timothy Harrington, the Irish Nationalist and Lord Mayor of Dublin.[394] According to the committee however the meeting was not deemed successful due to the fact that 'it did not stimulate as many qualified women throughout the country to offer themselves as candidates for the office of Poor Law Guardian as we had hoped.'[395] To qualify to run as a candidate, women had to be registered as electors and 'possess the residential qualification in their respective districts' and they had to be nominated by two registered electors residing in their respective districts.[396] These legal requirements were potentially daunting to women who had no prior experience in politics or any kind of administrative roles.

After the passing of the Poor Law Guardians Act in 1896, the IWSLGA received an 'unprecedented amount of correspondence', while subscriptions

[391] Minute book, 11 May, 1898. DWSA/3 NAI; Minute book, 2 November, 1905. DWSA/4, NAI
[392] Minute book, 1876-1913. DWSA/1-DWSA/9, NAI
[393] IWSLGA report for 1902. AA18427, NLI, p. 6; *Irish Times,* 25 Apr. 1902, p.7.
[394] Ibid.
[395] IWSLGA report for 1902. AA18427, NLI, p. 6
[396] IWSLGA, *Suggestions for Intending Women Workers*, P 790(11), NLI, pp. 5-6.

'increased proportionally.'[397] The IWSLGA remained in contact with the DWSA's middle-class social circles and in 1896 the secretaries corresponded with 200 'influential ladies and gentlemen' in Leinster, Munster and Connaught regarding the Poor Law Guardians' elections.[398] The IWSLGA also regularly submitted letters relating to women in local government to the 'leading newspapers', sometimes sending them to as many as 50.[399] In 1902 they moved out of their social circles by attempting to encourage Irish women graduates to join the association after writing to 54 of these women, but only 6 ended up joining the association.[400] While expanding then, the social basis and approach of the IWSLGA seemed much the same as the old DWSA. The fact that these were 'influential' ladies also reveals that the committee aimed to involve women who were highly ranked within social circles in their communities. Only the most qualified would be deemed suitable to run for roles in local politics. The IWSLGA remained very much a middle-class exclusive organisation as working-class women were unable to join due to the subscription fee or compete in local politics as they did not meet the residential qualifications. However, unlike the DWSA, the new Association could claim to have secured the election of women to local government. The committee reported in 1897 that 12 women had been returned as Poor Law Guardians.[401]

There is no aggregate data available on how many women were elected to these posts per year, but the committee published official lists of the number of women voted to local government positions in the years 1899 and 1902 as seen in table 2.10. These figures show that the IWSLGA was successful in helping women on to these positions. Out of the 121 women elected into local

[397] IWSLGA report for 1896. AA18427, NLI, p. 6
[398] Ibid, p. 3.
[399] Minute book, 13 September, 1901. DWSA/5 NAI.
[400] Minute book, 25 September, 1902. DWSA/5 NAI.
[401] IWSLGA report for 1897. AA18427, NLI, p. 4.

government roles in 1899, 13 had actually been re-elected into their post.[402] In 1902, the IWSLGA originally reported that so far that year, there were 4 women Urban District Councillors, 34 women Rural Councillors and 83 women Poor Law Guardians. This total was not an increase on those elected in 1899 and the committee felt this indicated the 'backward state of public opinion in relation to the responsible office of guardian.' They criticised the fact that many 'devoted' women were rejected by an 'ungrateful' electorate in favour of 'untried men.'[403] However, by October of that year the official list of women co-opted under the Local Government Act recorded that 135 women were elected, 44 of them for the first time. This shows that the number of women elected actually did increase, although it seems that 2 Urban District Councillors lost their positions.[404] In 1905, it was also reported that the elections did not meet the committee's expectations as there were still 120 Unions that did not have a woman guardian but the number of women returned for all of Ireland still numbered about 85.[405] This highlights the IWSLGA's frustrations when women, who they believed to be suitable, were not elected to these positions successfully. However, this data shows that despite these difficulties, the election of women to local government roles remained consistent over these years.

Table 2.10. Women voted to local government positions.[406]

Year	Urban District Councillors	Rural District Councillors	Poor Law Guardians	Total
1899	4	31	85	120
1902	2	33	100	135

[402] List of women elected or co-opted under the Local Government Act in 1899 in IWSLGA report for 1899. AA18427, NLI, pp. 1-4.
[403] IWSLGA report for 1902. AA18427, NLI, p. 7.
[404] List of women elected or co-opted under the Local Government Act in 1902. P 790(1), NLI, pp. 1-4.
[405] IWSLGA report for 1905. AA18427, NLI, p. 9
[406] List of women elected or co-opted under the Local Government Act in IWSLGA report for 1899. AA18427, NLI, pp. 1-4; List of women elected or co-opted under the Local Government Act in 1902. P 790(1), NLI, pp. 1-4.

As well as local government, the IWSLGA also succeeded in seeing women elected into other 'remunerative offices' where 200 women were employed in 'sundry paid capacities' as sanitary inspectors, school attendance inspectors, teachers of cookery, and other branches of 'domestic industry.'[407] This was some degree of progress, as these public roles granted women authority and experience for future political endeavours. There were, however, some difficulties for women pursuing public jobs, Ann Magill being the most well-known example. Magill had applied to the Clogher Board of Guardians to be permitted to act as a Rate Inspector to take over from her late father. Magill's application was refused as women were not eligible for the role, but she stood for the post regardless and was actually elected by the guardians. However, the Local Government Board refused to sanction this.[408] It seemed that the progress made in electing women to local government, was running ahead of the employment of women in roles which were not typically connected to the caretaker stereotype. This became a highly controversial and well reported case in both England and Ireland and Virginia Crossman has found that far from advancing the cause of women, this case 'reinforced the restrictions on Irish women's employment, at least in the short term.'[409] Crossman has also suggested that the refusal of the board to employ Magill stemmed from fears that the appointment 'threatened to open the floodgates to a tidal wave of applications from women that would undermine the very foundations of Irish local government.'[410] This case in particular highlighted the influence of gender norms on local government as it was felt women could not be rate collectors as they

[407] IWSLGA report for 1905. AA18427, NLI, p. 10.
[408] Virginia Crossman, *Politics, Pauperism and Power in Late Nineteenth-Century Ireland* (Manchester, 1994), pp. 199-120.
[409] Ibid, p. 211.
[410] Ibid, p. 206.

could not 'distrain for unpaid rates.'[411] This is evidence that the appointment of women to public work sometimes encountered difficulties, particularly if these jobs were deemed unwomanly. This role was not within the remit of what women were traditionally predisposed to do and they were refused from undertaking the role.

Another notable change in the campaign methods of the IWSLGA was their reluctance to pursue parliamentary petitioning campaigns. The DWSA had previously dedicated much of its of work into petitioning Parliament to allow women the parliamentary franchise. Having achieved a series of important local government reforms, the IWSLGA had less need to appeal to Parliament, especially as after 1890 the British suffrage movement as a whole turned away from petitioning the Commons, if not other authorities.[412] The last IWSLGA petition registered in the SCPP reports was in July 1897, which was submitted in favour of the Parliamentary Franchise (Extension of Women) Bill, and presented by Horace Plunkett, MP for South Dublin.[413] However, the IWSLGA committee continued to encourage local branches and suffragists to petition Parliament and write letters to MPs.[414] Overall, though, it is fair to say that petitioning was not central to the IWSLGA. Their expenditure contributed more to the publication of education pamphlets, rather than printing petitions. [415]

While they ceased to petition Parliament, the IWSLGA continued to appeal to authority through more informal appeals, such as regularly writing letters to the Chief Secretary of Ireland, Irish MPs and Union clerks on matters relating to women's suffrage bills and the election of women in local government

[411] Ibid.
[412] Miller, 'Practice of Petitioning', p. 5.
[413] SCPP, *Reports* (1897), p. 167; *Dublin Evening Herald*, 5 Jul. 1897, p. 2.
[414] Minute Book, 2 July, 1897. DWSA/3, NAI
[415] IWSLGA report for 1902. AA18427, NLI, p. 9.

positions.[416] In 1913 the Cork Branch of the IWSLGA reported sending a petition directly to MPs for the city and county of Cork in which they requested their support of Willoughby Dickinson's proposed amendment to the Government Reform Bill, which would enfranchise women.[417] This showed the innovation of the Cork branch, who directly petitioned their local MPs to support a bill, rather than petitioning Parliament. This absence of petitioning confirms Henry Miller's findings that there was a decline in parliamentary petitioning in the 1890-1914 period.[418] This was particularly the case for suffragists. Campaigners did continue to petition, but like the IWSLGA, now also used kindred forms like letter-writing or directly petitioning authorities. It marks a transformation in the methodology used by the organisation as appealing to authorities, other than Parliament, seemed to be the preferred campaign method of the IWSLGA.

Irish Women Poor Law Guardians

The most notable success of the IWSLGA was the attainment of the Poor Law Guardians Bill, which allowed unmarried or widowed women ratepayers to apply to run as Poor Law Guardians. Unfortunately, at the beginning, as the committee noted in the 1898 yearly report, this did not extend as far as married women. The committee regarded this as a 'serious disappointment respecting the operation of the Act.' They claimed that it was the obvious intention that the bill should include all married women of independent property. Due to complications involving the Lord Lieutenant, who had to 'issue the necessary Order in Council', these women would be largely disenfranchised for the following three years.[419] Despite this, the passing of the Bill was regarded by the IWSLGA a great success in the progression of suffrage in Ireland, particularly as

[416] Minute book 2 July, 1897; 11 May, 1898; 25 July, 1901; 20 March, 1902; 22 May, 1902; 11 December, 1902; 22 March, 1906. DWSA/4-DWSA/6, NAI.
[417] IWSLGA report for 1913. AA18427, NLI, p. 19.
[418] Miller, 'Practice of Petitioning', p. 21.
[419] IWSLGA report for 1898. AA18427, NLI, p. 4.

it finally awarded them the same rights as their English counterparts. This section provides an examination of the some of the pioneering women who were elected to local office

As early as April 1896, the first female Poor Law Guardian was elected, Elizabeth Martin of Bellaw in Enniskillen County Fermanagh.[420] Martin was reported by *Western People* as having 'always taken a great interest in the development of local industries and is a lady widely known in the district.'[421] Martin had clearly been long involved in her community, however, Diane Urquhart has noted that Martin was unopposed in her appointment and the 'local press depicted her co-option as a "walk over"' although they did concede that she 'possessed "excellent business habits."'[422] It is worth noting how her appointment was received in the press. The *Dundalk Democrat* described Martin as 'a middle-aged lady' who turned up to the board meeting and 'took her seat very coolly with the other guardian. She is not reported to have said much, but we shall see.'[423] In comparison the *Shields Daily News* offered a more positive perspective by reporting that that on entering the board-room she was met with 'cheers by the assembled male Guardians' and Martin responded by bowing 'in recognition.'[424] Evidently women guardians were viewed positively by some but with scepticism by others. Regardless of how Martin was viewed, her election was a huge achievement for the IWSLGA's campaign and the success of women electors continued to grow in the following years.

A number of women elected to public positions carried the title of 'Lady' proving that they were indeed affluent women in privileged positions. In 1902 there were 5 out of 121 women with the title of Lady elected on to public bodies,

[420] Minute book, 15 September, 1896. DWSA/3, NAI.
[421] *Western People,* 12 Sept. 1896, p. 7.
[422] Urquhart, *Women in Ulster Politics,* p. 122.
[423] *Dundalk Democrat,* 12 Sept. 1896, p. 7.
[424] *Shields Daily News,* 16 September, 1896. p. 3.

which included the Lady Monteagle of Rathkeale in Limerick who was the wife of Lord Monteagle and daughter of the Bishop of Meath. Monteagle was successfully elected to a position on the Rural District Council and as a Poor Law Guardian.[425] Upon her death she was remembered as having 'identified with every movement in the county which had for its object the benefit of the poor' as well as her efforts to bring 'much needed improvements' to the Irish Poor Law system.[426] Lady Maurice Fitzgerald of Wexford, the daughter of 7th Earl of Granard and daughter-in-law of the Duke of Leinster, was also elected that year as a Rural District Councillor and Poor Law Guardian. Lady Fitzgerald was reported to have been 'popularly known' and was very active in public life in the county. The *New Ross Standard* claimed that she 'made an immediate and generous response to every appeal' and was already ready to 'give her assistance and advice or to make a donation, and in a private manner' as well as this she gave a great deal of employment.[427] These articles yet again demonstrate that well known women in the community, who held philanthropic roles, were likely to succeed in being elected onto local government roles and even to be elected onto more than one local body.

Women in privileged positions also benefited from the backing and influence of a propertied electorate. A landowner named Susan Pringle, for example, was nominated as a Guardian for the Killala division of the Killala Union.[428] She was a Scottish woman who had been living in Ireland and the *Freeman's Journal* noted that she was the 'lifelong companion' of a Miss Harriet Gardiner who was 'well known and detested.'[429] Gardiner was said by the article to be under police protection for several years as a result of clearing her land and

[425] List of women elected or co-opted under the Local Government Act in 1899 in IWSLGA report for 1899. AA18427, NLI, pp. 1-4.
[426] *Weekly Irish Times,* 2 May. 1908, p. 14.
[427] *New Ross Standard,* 20 Nov. 1942, p. 4.
[428] *Freeman's Journal,* 8 Mar. 1897, p. 7.
[429] Ibid.

evicting its former occupiers. Despite this connection, Pringle was still accepted as a candidate and voted in to her position by the propertied electorate. The *Freeman's Journal* claimed that Pringle's 'tenants are fairly well satisfied' and was described as having been 'judicious and reasonable in her dealings, and gives a great deal of employment to the tenants.'[430] This reflection of Pringle was possibly influenced by the political outlook of the propertied electors, particularly given her association with someone such as Gardiner who was so disliked among the lower classes of the community. Just because Pringle was popular with the propertied electorate, does not mean she was popular with the wider public, who were more likely to be affected by her election as they were on the receiving end of the welfare provided by public bodies.

Various 'lady guardians' naturally served as members of IWSLGA's committees and their membership solidified the IWSLGA's connections to local politics. Anne Rowan, for example, founded the Tralee branch of the IWSLGA in 1896 and was soon after voted onto the Tralee Board of Guardians in 1897.[431] Rowan had a wide range of connections as she, alongside Frances Donovan and Teresa Leonard, established a Kerry Ladies' Poor Law Association, which included members such as the Lady Monteagle.[432] This demonstrates the connections that existed between many women elected into local government roles. When Rowan lost her position as a lady guardian in 1898, the *Kerry Weekly Reporter* reported that Mr J.P. Donovan of the Dispensary committee 'went out of his way at a meeting of the Tralee Board of Guardians to try and conciliate Miss Rowan, and the ratepayers of Tralee, who had in her such a vigilant and capable custodian of their interests.' [433] To make up for this loss she was then put forward

[430] Ibid.
[431] Minute book, 11 May, 1896. DWSA/3, NAI.
[432] 'Politics and institutions in Kerry in the early 20th century', NAI [www.census.nationalarchives.ie/exhibition/kerry/government_politics_institutions.html] [Last Accessed, 20 September, 2019].
[433] *Kerry Weekly Reporter*, 9 Apr. 1898, p. 4.

as a member of the Dispensary committee, within which she would go on to play a prominent and dedicated role.[434] Evidently, Rowan was a popular public figure within her community, showing the importance of having these connections to see women elected into local government roles. In addition to this, Rowan was a public speaker and presented a paper on 'Outdoor Relief' at a conference of Women Poor Law Guardians and Other Ladies at the Mansion house in April 1900.[435] Rowan's experience stemmed from working within the public since 1847, which was the year of the Great Famine. [436] She was heavily involved within the community of Tralee and she felt that 'she knew every poor person in town. [437] Having popular public figures like Rowan as a representative of the IWSLGA, would potentially attract new members to the organisation through her connections within the community.

Influential women like Rowan were valuable to the IWSLGA's campaign and Rowan was reported by the *Kerry News* to 'had been fully twenty years working hard to get women into public positions and she thought that up to the present they had ninety-nine women in good public positions in Ireland.' [438] Rowan, as a member of the IWSLGA very much supported the idea of education as a political method and believed 'there was no good in trying to change peoples' habits when they get old, many movements that were started began at the wrong end.'[439] Rowan, as well as dedicating herself to the poor, was evidently a very committed supporter of the Irish Suffrage movement. By placing Rowan and other women in positions of influence, such as the IWSLGA and the Board of

[434] Ibid.
[435] Irish Women's Suffrage and Local Government Association, *Papers read at a conference of women Poor Law Guardians and other ladies at the Mansion House (Dublin), the 19th of April, 1900* (Dublin, 1903). P 790(10), NLI.
[436] *Kerry News*, 6 May. 1908, p. 5.
[437] Ibid.
[438] Ibid.
[439] Ibid.

Guardians, they were educating the public and women alike on the positive aspects of women's involvement in public roles and women's suffrage.

Connections to Suffrage Organisations

Beyond its own activities and promotion of women in local government, the IWSLGA was also important in fostering networks within the wider women's movement. Examining these links not only shows the ties that existed between different women's organisations but also the personal connections between activists. Sandra Stanley Holton has pointed out that the suffrage movement has often been studied in terms of different organisations, which exaggerates their differences; yet looking at individual stories and personal networks presents a much more fluid picture.[440] Hannah Sheehy Skeffington, founder of the 1908 Irish Women's Franchise League (IWFL), attended many IWSLGA meetings prior to the IWFL's foundation, some of which she was a speaker.[441] Margaret Ward has also found that Skeffington recruited her family members to join and her sisters and brother paid subscriptions from 1903 to 1906.[442] Another well-known women's activist, Jennie Wyse Power, was also present at some IWSLGA meetings.[443] Power was a founding member of Sinn Féin and of the Irish Nationalist women's organisation Inghinidhe na hÉireann. She had also been a member of the Ladies' Land League which had been a women's auxiliary of the Land League between 1881-1882.[444] Eva Gore Booth was a founder and honorary secretary of the Sligo branch of the IWSLGA.[445] Booth was another committed

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[440] Sandra Stanley Holton, *Suffrage Days: Stories from the Women's Suffrage Movement* (London, 1996), pp. 2-4.
[441] Minute book, 2 September, 1904; 24 February, 1905; 16 March, 1905; 11 January, 1906. DWSA/5-DWSA/6, NAI.
[442] As cited in Quinlan, *Genteel Revolutionaries,* pp. 158-159.
[443] Minute book, 11 January, 1906. DWSA/6, NAI.
[444] William Murphy and Lesa Ní Mhunghaile. 'Power, Jennie Wyse Jane O'Toole' in James McGuire and James Quinn (eds), *Dictionary of Irish Biography*, (Cambridge, 2009), [http://dib.cambridge.org/viewReadPage.do?articleId=a7454], [Last Accessed, 20 April, 2020].
[445] IWSLGA report for 1898. AA18427, NLI, p. 10.

suffragist who, alongside Esther Roper, had organised petitions from industrial areas of England in favour of suffrage and was also the sister of Constance Markievicz.[446] Evidently, the IWSLGA was an important node within a wider network of women's activism that cut across different organisations.

The IWSLGA still maintained contact with associates of the NUWSS and regularly corresponded with Elizabeth Wolstenholme Elmy, a founding member of the Women's Franchise League in 1889 and veteran suffrage campaigner since the 1860s.[447] Elmy and Haslam were friends and Elmy wrote a poem for the Haslam's Golden Wedding.[448] They discussed matters relating to suffrage but in 1904 it was noted by the committee that in response to Elmy's enclosed draft of a Women's Suffrage Bill, they would have to wait to take action 'until later in the year until we hear from the London Society what they intend to do in regard to it.'[449] Rather than taking instruction from London, the IWSLGA saw that there was little point in one Association petitioning and lobbying unless it was part of a wider co-ordinated effort.

The IWSLGA was against any militancy from groups in Ireland and Britain and only supported constitutional forms of protest. Organisations, such as the aforementioned IWFL, pursued a campaign of militancy and was influenced by the militant Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU), formed in 1903 by Emmeline and Christabel Pankhurst. It is necessary to point out, however, that militancy and constitutionalism were not absolute opposites and Henry Miller

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[446] Frances Clarke, 'Booth, Eva Selina Gore' in Ibid, [http://dib.cambridge.org/viewReadPage.do?articleId=a0784] [Last Accessed, 20 April, 2020].
[447] Sandra Stanley Holton, 'Elmy, Elizabeth Clarke Wolstenholme' in H.C.G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (eds.) *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 2008), [https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/38638] [Last Accessed, 20 April, 2020].
[448] 'On the occasion of the Golden Wedding of Mr. and Mrs. Haslam', enclosure in Elizabeth Wolstenholme Elmy to Harriet McIlquham, 20th March 1904, fol.255, Elizabeth Wolstenholme Elmy Papers, Add. Mss. 47449-55, British Library.
[449] Minute book, 22 September, 1904. DWSA/5, NAI.

has found there were actually different 'shades of militancy.'[450] Despite both the IWFL and WSPU pursing militant tactics, both organisations continued to petition and utilise constitutional forms of political agitation, such as petitioning. There was no hard-line distinction between militancy and constitutionalism and this is examined in more detail in chapter 3. The IWFL however had become impatient with the slow progress of organisations such as the IWSLGA and resolved to 'follow the lead of the WSPU by using militancy as a weapon if it should prove necessary.'[451] The IWSLGA was keen to disassociate themselves with all forms of militancy and in 1909 Haslam blamed their loss of members on the actions of militants 'which she felt was unfair' as they had no connection to these militant societies.[452] In the annual report for 1908 the committee commented on the actions of militant suffragettes in Britain and decided that 'such tactics are not suited to the condition of things in Ireland.'[453] Clearly, the IWSLGA saw constitutionalist tactics as the most appropriate way to pursue suffrage.

While not agreeing with their actions, the IWSLGA was still supportive of the IWFL and WSPU and appeared to understand why they felt they had to take militant action. In 1907 the committee noted that there was a 'withdrawal of several of our old subscribers from continued support of our Association.'[454] The committee strongly believed that 'this defection as we understand, has been, in some cases, intended as a protest against action of our militant friends in England, in invading public meetings.'[455] Yet they emphasised that this form of protest had often been undertaken by men 'under like conditions, have always resorted to, upon a very much larger scale, without reproach'.[456] In fact, the

[450] Miller, 'Practice of Petitioning', p. 4.
[451] Quinlan, *Genteel Revolutionaries,* p. 160.
[452] Ibid.
[453] IWSLGA report for 1908. AA18427, NLI, p. 14.
[454] IWSLGA report for 1907. AA18427, NLI, p. 19.
[455] Ibid.
[456] Ibid.

committee seemed critical of those subscribers as they asked would it not be 'more praiseworthy if the objectors had doubled their support as a protest against the flagrant injustice' and equally criticised the double standards of sexuality as they noted it was 'the old, old story:- one law for men, another for women, has been the abiding rule throughout all ages.'[457] Despite disagreeing with the militancy, they still refused to join in as what they described the easy 'but not very chivalrous, denunciation of the women' who they reasoned resorted to militancy due to the 'the severest provocation and in some cases subjecting themselves to brutal outrages.'[458] They also heavily sympathised with activists who 'have suffered imprisonment under degrading conditions in consequence of their devotion to what they believe to be their duty.'[459] The committee actually extended their 'warmest gratitude' to the women who went to prison as they 'under different circumstances, have not felt called upon to follow their example.'[460] Despite this sympathy, the IWSLGA remained determined to rely on peaceful pressure methods.

The IWSLGA continued to partake in constitutional methods and also partook in peaceful demonstrations. This included a major suffrage demonstration held in London in June 1908. Anna and Thomas Haslam, as well as 7 other committee members were present.[461] The Dublin committee itself believed how their work made their growing entrance into public politics more palatable for those with conservative views, when in 1904 they found 'striking proof of the advance of public opinion during the last few years.'[462] The committee celebrated the fact that 'one of the most eminent conservative journals in the United Kingdom, the Standard, had conceded that '"the advocates of

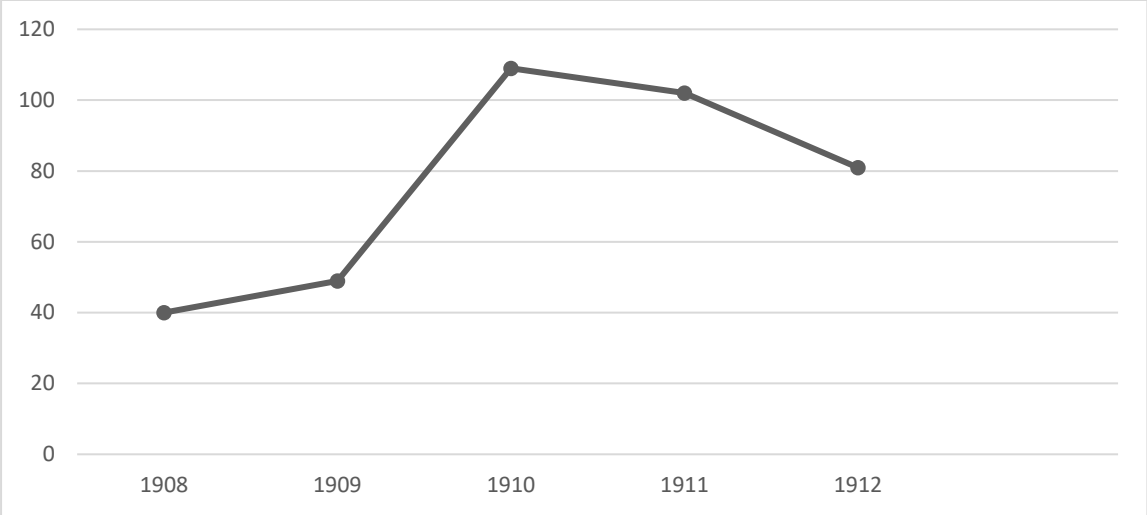
[457] Ibid.
[458] Ibid.
[459] Ibid.
[460] Ibid, p. 15.
[461] IWSLGA report for 1908. AA18427, NLI, p. 7; Cullen, 'Anna Maria Haslam', p. 182.
[462] IWSLGA report for 1904. AA18427, NLI, pp. 5-6.

women's political rights are on fairly safe ground so long as they confine themselves to the assimilation of the Parliamentary and Municipal Franchises"- which is substantially nearly all that our associations are at present asking for.'[463] They were aware from the beginning that their methods would not see immediate success, but in order to campaign peacefully the committee believed it was their only option.

The county branches also maintained that success could be found through peaceful methods, such as focusing on education. In 1909 Elizabeth Christie, the honorary secretary of the Cork branch, reported that 'the quiet and educational methods are those best suited for the furthering of our cause in Cork.' She also noted that 'this procedure has been successful in so far as it has caught the ear, and gained the attention of many who were heretofore prejudiced through misunderstanding and inaccurate information, respecting our outlook and aims.' She found that the cause 'though slowly, yet steadily, is gaining ground, and the number of our subscribers is being augmented.'[464] Figure 2.4 shows how many subscribers the Cork committee had between 1908 to 1912. By 1913 the Cork branch had amassed 80 members.[465] This was a marked improvement on the number of members amassed during the early days of the DWSA.

[463] Ibid.
[464] IWSLGA report for 1909. AA18427, NLI, pp. 15-16
[465] IWSLGA report for 1913. AA18427, NLI, p. 17.

Figure 2.4. Number of subscribers to the Cork branch of the IWSLGA, 1908-1912.[466]



Similarly, in 1911, Mabel Dodds and Everina Massy of the Limerick committee reported that their branch had doubled owing to their efforts to organise public meetings and through the distribution of suffrage literature. They had also succeeded in getting a resolution in favour of Women's Suffrage passed by the Limerick Borough Council.[467] In 1912 however they had little of interest to report and noted that they were actually refraining from holding public events due to the growing hostile feeling in Limerick towards the suffrage question.[468] They blamed 'militant outrages' for the alienation of their sympathisers. It is possible that the Limerick committee was blaming militancy for their own issues as a convenient scapegoat. Perhaps their supporters had grown tired of their lack of progress, as militant suffrage activists 'criticised Victorian suffragists and their Edwardian constitutionalist successors for their stale and unsuccessful methods.'[469] These drops in membership suggests that the IWSLGA's struggles could not all be blamed on the actions of militants.

[466] IWSLGA reports for 1908-1912, AA18427, NLI.
[467] IWSLGA report for 1911. AA18427, NLI, p. 20.
[468] IWSLGA report for 1912. AA18427, NLI, p. 17
[469] Miller, 'Practice of Petitioning', p. 2.

As mentioned earlier in the chapter, the IWSLGA welcomed the formation of the IWFL as they were viewed as added support for the suffrage movement in Ireland. In 1908 the committee noted that 'the establishment of the Women's Franchise League in 1908' and of 'an independent women's suffrage association in Belfast, has drawn a large accession of earnest effort into our movement.'[470] They even found that the formation of the anti-suffrage league, instead of hindering their campaign had actually 'by its stimulating influence, been an unqualified benefit, to the cause.' [471] Despite the disagreements that may have existed between these movements, what was important was that suffrage movement was gaining more attention, particularly from women. The IWSLGA's campaign had grown substantially compared to its predecessor, the DWSA, and subsequently contributed to the progression of women's suffrage in Ireland.

Conclusion

The DWSA marked the first formal organisation of women's suffrage in Ireland and while the basis of their support constituted those from their own social circles and sympathetic politicians, the DWSA laid much emphasis on the self-education of members on suffrage and made attempts to reach out to the unconverted in the public by holding public meetings, petitioning, publishing letters and advertisements and distributing copies of the *WSJ* to public reading rooms. It was also during the DWSA's period of activity that Irishwomen were granted the right to sit as Poor Law Guardians and vote in local elections. This was a notable achievement that cannot be diminished by the idea that attaining parliamentary suffrage was the ultimate barometer upon which to define success. Smaller victories, such as the local vote, are also worth taking into account.

This chapter has shown that the DWSA benefited from the support of sympathetic Irish MPs from backgrounds such as Home Rule, Unionist,

[470] IWSLGA report for 1908. AA18427, NLI, pp. 11-12.
[471] Ibid.

Nationalist and Conservative parties who joined their ranks and would prove to be a great source of aid to the movement by presenting suffrage petitions or offering advice and information regarding debates in Parliament. It also offers a view into the intricate political connections between Irish suffrage and Irish parliamentary political life. The DWSA received support from many political backgrounds, which explains why they refused to associate themselves with any party in particular.

This chapter has also demonstrated how the involvement of women in the DWSA additionally provided them with invaluable opportunities to demonstrate political leadership in running an organisation. The early years of the DWSA did feature a dominance of men in chairing roles, but as time went on women increasingly chaired meetings and eventually superseded their male counterparts completely. Women also learned how to organise and to run both public and drawing room meetings. They gained valuable political experience through the organisation of petitioning campaigns and by writing to influential men such as MPs or local councillors. These were methods that would be replicated by the IWSLGA through the continued membership of individuals such as Anna Haslam, Rose McDowell and Lady Margaret Sarah Dockrell.

What has also been demonstrated here is that the DWSA benefitted from a relationship with the central committee in London. The fact the DWSA struggled to raise funds was also indicated by their reliance on the Central Committee which often helped with the costs thus suggesting there was a hierarchy in existence. There were also instances when the DWSA was not a priority to the campaign in England and it was unfairly criticised by some, such as Anna Perrier, who demonstrated a level of disconnect with the campaign in Ireland.

This chapter has established, through petitioning patterns, that the DWSA was not too far behind some of their British counterparts even if they fell behind in their ability to raise funds. Petitioning was heavily utilised by the DWSA as it

was one of the few ways they could voice their discontent and also contribute to the efforts of the suffrage movement in Britain. This offers further explanation as to why petitioning was the main preserve of the disenfranchised. Petitioning patterns also revealed how the DWSA placed greater importance on signatures from women householders in order to emphasize the respectability of the campaign. Overall, this chapter has established how the DWSA was able to politicise women despite the barriers and difficulties they consistently faced and how working with the grain of maternalistic rhetoric and constitutional methods, primarily petitioning, played a major role in allowing them to do this.

The IWSLGA's expansion to focus on the continued development of a Municipal Franchise was also a fundamental contribution to the politicisation of Irish women. As women gained more rights on a local level, the IWSLGA moved away from petitioning as a campaign method to devote their time and funding to promoting women into local government. This chapter has shown that through their focus on education and non-militant methods, like meetings, letter-writing, direct appeals to authorities and the dispersal of literature, the IWSLGA was able to change the idea that local government was off limits to women. By taking advantage of established gender roles, they were able to combine the idea that public spaces, such as workhouses, required the experience of women who were viewed to belong within the private sphere of the household. The IWSLGA equated the workhouse to a large household and its inhabitants as families in need of guidance from a motherly figure. This connection, alongside the IWSLGA's other campaign methods, aided in the gradual acceptance of women into positions of local government. This did not carry the level of influence that parliamentary suffrage had, but it allowed women to influence their local communities and allowed them to demonstrate their competency to run for political positions. The IWSLGA was able to successfully break this boundary through their informative publications, public meetings and articles in the press.

Accounting for the steady growth of the IWSLGA's membership has demonstrated how a focus on local politics helped transform the IWSLGA into a female dominated organisation, with women chairing and speaking more and an increase in members joining their ranks. These positions were incredibly valuable for the political education of Irish women, in preparation for their gradual acceptance into parliamentary politics. The fact that more meetings were held perhaps offers reason to the growing notice the organisation received. A study of their campaign methods has also emphasised the middle-class character of the IWSLGA. The organisation consistently reached out to affluential ladies for their support and did not extend the same to the working classes who would have been unable to pay a subscription. Due to qualification restrictions however, it was inevitable that women who became Poor Law Guardians would be middle-class or elite property owners. This chapter has also shown that many of the women elected were already well-known members of their community, demonstrating how philanthropy or titles such as 'lady' had already elevated women into positions of influence. This extension of the Municipal Franchise may have only benefited a middle-class minority but these women were still pioneers.

Chapter three: Constitutionalism, Militancy and the Women's Question: Re-examining the British and Irish Suffrage Movements Through their Use of Petitioning, c. 1909-1914.

It is historical commonplace that the campaign for women's suffrage shifted from constitutionalism to more militant activity in the early twentieth century. Yet new 'militant' approaches deployed petitions in new ways, rather than abandoning them entirely.[472] Among the new bodies that pioneered new forms of protest in this period were the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU) established in 1903, and the Irish Women's Franchise League (IWFL) formed in 1908. The way petitions were used by suffrage activists changed as the IWFL and WSPU began to deploy more militant campaign strategies. Rather than simply equating militancy to violence, this chapter will show that militancy is actually best understood as a spectrum. As Laura Nym Mayhall has argued, suffragette militancy enacted the 'radical idea that citizens had the right to resist tyrannical authority' and became performative as it exhibited 'women's bodies in pain'.[473] Indeed, such performative actions included forms of civil disobedience, or 'mild militancy', such as heckling political speakers or organising large public protests, as this chapter will demonstrate.[474] Militancy, rather than an act of violence, became a form of visibility politics that generated more attention than constitutional methods, such as letter writing and drawing-room meetings. This chapter will show that some members of militant organisations actually disapproved of militancy's more aggressive forms of protest, such as damaging government buildings. For the purposes of this chapter, suffragette will be used to refer to members of militant organisations such as the WSPU and IWFL, while suffragist will refer to organisations that favour constitutional methods, such as

[472] Miller, 'Practice of Petitioning', p. 1.
[473] Laura Nym Mayhall, 'Defining Militancy: Radical Protest, the Constitutional Idiom, and Women's Suffrage in Britain, 1908-1909' *Journal of British Studies,* 39:3 (2000), p. 344.
[474] Miller, 'Practice of Petitioning', p. 9.

the NUWSS or the Irish Women's Reform League (IWRL). 'Suffrage activists' will be used when discussing suffrage campaigners collectively. Though, it is important to bear in mind that there is no 'hard distinction between "militant" suffragettes" and "constitutional" suffragists.'[475] The relationship between the two and their approach to militancy versus constitutionalism is more complicated and this chapter intends to examine that further.

Petitioning, as it blurred constitutional methods with new forms of more militant protest, was a subject that was much debated within the IWFL and wider suffrage networks. Through an examination of these suffrage debates on petitioning, which were mainly published in the *Irish Citizen*, the official newspaper of the IWFL, this chapter will reveal the complicated and connected relationship between militancy and constitutionalism. With an emergence of militant tactics in this period, it was inevitable that approaches to petitioning would also change. Henry Miller has rightly argued that 'the militant reinvention of petitioning was grounded in a radical interpretation of constitutional history' and 'stressed the paramount importance of the presentation of petitions.'[476] This chapter will demonstrate how petitioning could be deployed in conjunction with militant acts, as presenting petitions 'allowed suffragettes to create a spectacle.'[477] Petitioning continued to play a role as a form of constitutional protest, but now was being amalgamated into militant methods as a form of performative petitioning.

This chapter will show that petitioning was one of the principal interactions between Irish and British suffragettes. The complicated relationship between the British and Irish suffrage movements has been examined most extensively by Margaret Ward.[478] Yet this work fails to acknowledge how the

[475] Miller, 'Practice of Petitioning', p. 3.
[476] Ibid, p. 8.
[477] Ibid, p. 10.
[478] Margaret Ward, 'Conflicting interests'.

debates over petitioning offer a new vantage point through which to study the relationship between the British and Irish suffrage movements. Rather than focusing on individuals or organisations such as the WSPU or the IWFL, as has been done by historians like Ward, Martin Pugh and June Purvis, this chapter will focus on petitioning in order to explore these relationships.[479] A focus on petitioning shows a broad pattern of co-operation between different suffrage organisations, which have been previously studied individually. This adds to our understanding of how the British and Irish organisations co-operated on petitioning campaigns. This also shows how various forms of petitioning persisted across militancy and constitutionalism.

In addition to this, a form of petitioning, which has not received attention by scholars, is petitioning by or on behalf of imprisoned activists in Ireland. Historians such as Henry Miller and Laura Nym Mayhall have examined the role of petitioning within the suffrage movement, but have not done so from an Irish perspective nor from the perspective of political prisoners.[480] These petitions protest about the treatment of imprisoned suffrage activists and act as an example of different forms of petitioning as they were quasi-legal appeals to the Lord Lieutenant and other authorities. Not only does this allow for an examination of militancy through petitioning, but also an examination of other forms of petitioning utilised by suffragettes.

Through the examination of petitions, it is also possible to re-examine women's suffrage from the standpoint of religion and how it affected the campaign. Cliona Murphy and Robert Saunders have both examined the role of religious societies within the suffrage movement in Ireland and Britain, and they acknowledge that these organisations looked to focus their campaign on ideals of morality and decency and women wished to hold religious services as well as

[479] Martin Pugh, *The Pankhursts*; June Purvis, *Christabel Pankhurst*; June Purvis, *Emmeline Pankhurst*.
[480] Miller, 'Practice of Petitioning'; Mayhall, *The Militant Suffrage Movement*.

meetings and to work alongside the clergy and earn their approval.[481] Prayer was central to the activities of these societies in both Britain and Ireland.[482] These works, however, fail to take petitioning into account and what this meant for religious societies' relationships with the church and their non-denominational suffrage counterparts. What this chapter will show is that petitions to the church were not just in aid of suffrage, but also to obtain more equality in their religious communities, but were hampered by the personal opinions of religious figures.

The first and second sections of this chapter will examine the emergence of militancy and petitioning's role in subsequent suffrage debates surrounding militancy and constitutionalism. Suffrage campaigners increasingly turned away from petitioning Parliament but did not abandon petitioning altogether, in fact petitioning became incorporated with militant acts through mass protests and individual complaints to authorities. Petitioning thus blurs the lines between militancy and constitutionalism and becomes a point of recurring debate within the movement. Some suffragettes supported petitioning as a valuable constitutional tool, while some questioned its usefulness. The remaining sections of this chapter consider the diverse ways activists used petitions in new and innovative ways. The third section will examine the presentation of a petition by the Lord Mayor of Dublin, John J. Farrell, in 1911 to Parliament on behalf of the suffrage movement in favour of women's suffrage, which illuminates relations between Irish and British suffrage activists at a time when they were strained by disagreements over the question of Irish Home Rule. This example is also an instance of the new performative style of petitioning pioneered by militants. The fourth section looks at imprisoned suffragettes and force feeding and will examine the significance of petitioning for women who were protesting the use

[481] Cliona Murphy, *The Women's Suffrage Movement and Irish Society in the Early Twentieth Century* (Hemel Hempstead, 1989), p. 141

[482] Cliona Murphy, 'The Religious Context of the Women's Suffrage Campaign in Ireland', *Women's History Review,* 6:4 (1997), p. 556; Robert Saunders, '"A Great and Holy War": Religious Routes to Women's Suffrage, 1909-1914', *English Historical Review,* 134:571 (2019), p. 1479

of force feeding on the hunger-strikers. This will be studied through former WSPU member Mary Gawthorpe's petition and Irish suffrage activist's petitions to the Lord Lieutenant. These demonstrate the versatility of petitioning and its many uses by petitioning against force feeding, which shows mobilisation against this practice. This was a highly contested issue and this section will examine how and why women used petitioning as a form of protest against the force feeding of hunger-strikers. It also demonstrates the different ways these women could petition by targeting a figure closer to home rather than going to Parliament. The final section of this chapter will then look at the emergence of denominational suffrage societies and how they not only petitioned clergy to support petitions, but also to give women roles within the vestry and to hold services in support of the suffrage movement. This shows how valuable petitioning was for women involved in denominational organisations as well as the role of the Anglican and Catholic Churches in mobilisation. Overall, this chapter will examine how the suffrage movement and its approach to petitioning developed and how this reflected on wider definitions of constitutionalism versus militancy.

Emergence of militancy

In order to better understand the development of militancy and how acts of which greatly varied within the suffrage movement, it is necessary to recognise how militancy emerged from suffragettes' frustrations with traditional methods. As seen in previous chapters, nineteenth-century women's movements generally deployed a well-worn range of methods, including public meetings, letter writing and petitioning. The IWFL was founded by Hannah Sheehy Skeffington and Margaret Cousins in 1908 with the objective of obtaining the vote on the same terms as men.[483] They formed 'out of discontent' with the progress of their

[483] Maria Luddy, *Hannah Sheehy Skeffington* (Dundalk, 1995), p. 15

predecessors, the IWSLGA, and Francis Sheehy Skeffington believed the formation of a militant movement in England 'made the younger women aware of the older organisation's "inertia and ineffectiveness."'[484] Although they did not deploy militant tactics, such as stoning government buildings, until four years after their foundation.[485] The IWFL were inspired by the WSPU's campaign, which firstly 'centred on exhibitions of popular support.'[486] These exhibitions were sometimes called 'mild militancy', which often involved using petitions to create spectacles in Westminster.[487] However, when these failed to make any apparent impact on the Liberal leadership 'militant campaigning increasingly focused on threats to public order.'[488] As a result, petitioning became a contested issue for both the IWFL and WSPU as militants continued to use petitioning. This demonstrated that petitioning did not always have to be peaceful, but could still imply and convey a threat. At times petitioning could also be used in conjunction with what were seen as militant acts.

Militancy also emerged from a frustration with disillusionment around traditional petitions to Parliament as these were not producing the desired results. The IWFL recognised this frustration in 1912 when Margaret Cousins acknowledged that petitioning was a 'recognised constitutional right of men' which women often resorted to. This 'constitutional right' however, often resulted in the arrest of women presenting petitions and 'subjected to severe terms of imprisonment as ordinary criminals.'[489] It seemed that the IWFL were following the lead of the WSPU, which had already expressed its frustrations regarding petitioning in 1909, when Christabel Pankhurst published her article,

[484] Murphy, *The Women's Suffrage Movement,* p. 29.
[485] Ibid, p. 30.
[486] Holton, *Feminism and Democracy,* p. 30.
[487] Miller, 'Practice of Petitioning', p. 9.
[488] Holton, *Feminism and Democracy',* p. 30.
[489] *The Irish Citizen,* 25 May. 1912, p. 3.

The Right of Petition.[490] This article was occasioned by the failure of Emmeline Pankhurst's appeal for her arrest on a public order offense while attempting to present a petition to Prime minister H.H. Asquith in June 1909.[491] Christabel Pankhurst referred to petitioning as 'second in importance only to the right of voting as is the only constitutional weapon available to the voteless citizen.'[492] Christabel Pankhurst would later reiterate that no violence would have occurred in 1909 had Parliament accepted their right to petition.[493] Petitioning was one of the few ways women could legally protest for suffrage and it was this denial of the right to petition, alongside other injustices, that saw the rise of militancy grow within the suffrage movement.

The IWFL's initial aim was to support militancy rather than take part in it and initially demanded that votes for women be incorporated with the proposed Home Rule Bill.[494] So, for example, the IWFL sought supportive resolutions from 'the most influential County and District Councils' and to enlist the support of Irish members of Parliament through constitutional means.[495] This changed, however, in 1912 when during a debate on a Women's Suffrage Bill, 'the Nationalist members, with the exception of three independents, either voted against or abstained.' [496] Margaret Cousins viewed this 'concerted' action as a 'clear pronouncement of hostility to the cause of Irish women's freedom.'[497] This demonstrated why the IWFL felt angered by John Redmond and the Irish Parliamentary Party's (IPP) prioritisation of their support for Asquith's Liberal Government and Irish Home Rule over any progress for women's suffrage.

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[490] *Votes for Women*, 10 Dec. 1909, p. 168.
[491] Miller, 'Practice of Petitioning', pp. 5-6.
[492] *Votes for Women*, 10 Dec. 1909, p. 168
[493] *Votes for Women*, 24 May. 1912, p. 532.
[494] Margaret Ward, '"Suffrage First, Above All Else" An Account of the Irish Suffrage Movement', *Feminist Review*, 10 (1982), p. 24
[495] *The Irish Citizen*, 25 May. 1912, p. 3.
[496] Ibid.
[497] Ibid.

While some IPP members supported suffrage, when it came to prioritising Home Rule, they 'stepped into line under their party leader.'[498]

This resulted in members of the IWFL feeling betrayed and turning against the IPP, which further influenced the organisation's move towards militant tactics. Hannah Sheehy Skeffington was scathing of Redmond and his party as she referred them as 'notorious promise-breakers'.[499] Such views were also shared by the WSPU, which declared war on the IPP. [500] Diane Urquhart has rightly argued that Irish politics was dominated by the Home Rule question and it 'alienated many women from joining the Irish suffrage campaign as many perceived Ireland's fate to be of more consequence than votes for women.'[501] Skeffington herself was aware of this as she claimed that the Home Rule issue had 'swamped everything' and distracted from the suffrage campaign and it wasn't until the development of militant agitation that Ireland began 'to take a widespread interest in the movement.'[502] The IWFL were thus affected on how they worked on the ground, due to conflicts with politicians, and this offers further reason as to their increasing turn to militant tactics.

The politics of this period influenced changes in the suffrage movement and a subsequent growth in militancy as suffragettes grew frustrated at the notable absence of women's franchise from proposed Home Rule legislation. Women, such as Hanna Sheehy Skeffington, strongly believed that breaking point had been reached as 'constitutionalism had failed to 'evoke response.' [503] After the Liberal government lost their parliamentary majority in 1910 and became dependent on Irish support, the political context changed to the

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[498] Owens, *A Social History of Women in Ireland,* p. 88.
[499] *The Irish Citizen,* 31 Aug. 1912, p. 18.
[500] Ward, 'Conflicting Interests', p. 131.
[501] Diane Urquhart, '" An Articulate and Definite Cry for Political Freedom": The Ulster Suffrage Movement', *Women's History Review,* 11:2 (2002), p. 273.
[502] *The Irish Citizen,* 25 May. 1912, p. 3.
[503] *The Irish Citizen,* 22 Jun. 1912, p. 37.

detriment of suffrage. Skeffington therefore felt that it was time 'for Irish-women to realise citizenship by becoming ''criminals.'' '[504] Many suffragettes felt the same as feelings were intensely bitter due to the actions of the IPP. Cliona Murphy has suggested that as a result of these feelings, militancy in Ireland would not be the same as militancy in England, as Irish militancy was a response to the disappointment of being failed by Irish MPs.[505] This was not necessarily true, as British militancy was also born out of frustration with the Liberal Party being led by the anti-suffragist Asquith and their refusal to support a women's suffrage bill.[506] In both cases, petitioning was central to arguments about militancy. A new generation of suffrage activists were abandoning polite petitions directed to Parliament, in favour of new forms of subscriptional appeals, that would be directed to authorities in more assertive, and at times, more militant ways.

Constitutionalism versus militancy

While often regarded at the time and since as mutually exclusive, there was a complicated relationship between militancy and constitutionalism as an examination of new methods of petitioning will demonstrate. Indeed, an exaggerated emphasis on different methods has obscured the similarities and connections between militants and constitutionalists. As Louise Ryan has written, differences were 'largely about tactics' than ends.[507] Writing in 1915, and reflecting on the suffrage movement, Marion E. Duggan, a member of the non-militant IWRL and a critic of militancy, wrote that debates over tactics obscured the fact that suffrage campaigners shared values and ideas.[508] Yet clearly debates

[504] *The Irish Citizen,* 22 Jun. 1912, p. 37.
[505] Murphy, *The Women's Suffrage Movement,* p. 88.
[506] Holton, *Feminism and Democracy,* p. 30.
[507] Louise Ryan, *Winning the Vote for Women: The Irish Citizen Newspaper and the Suffrage Movement in Ireland* (Dublin, 2018), p. 26.
[508] *The Irish Citizen,* 16 Jan., 1915. p. 267

over militancy reflected tensions within Irish suffragism as elsewhere.[509] It was hard to rebut militants' criticism that conventional tactics had failed. Even Duggan conceded that 'fifty years of petitions, though most fruitful in many ways, had not made "Votes for Women" practical politics.'[510] Duggan recognised that petitioning had once been beneficial, even if it did not yield results in enfranchisement. However, while Duggan accepted the premise of militants, she denied the implication that militancy was the 'only alternative to petitions.'[511] Expressing distaste for the emphasis that militants placed on feeling and affect, Duggan derided the view that 'petitions failed, so militancy must succeed, [which] is a favourite argument of those who prefer feeling to intellect as a guide to political expediency.' [512] As Duggan's article shows, petitioning was central to debates over the merits of militancy and constitutionalism. Duggan was one of the 'more radical universalistic suffragists' but still opposed militancy.[513] This demonstrates how defining militancy could become complicated, as Duggan was still opposed to militancy, even after acknowledging that constitutional methods, like petitioning, were slow to show practical results.

Offering a more complex view on militancy debates, in 1914 Dora Mellone believed in the benefits of constitutional methods and appeared to blame activists, rather than politicians, for the lack of results. Mellone, a member of the Northern Committee of the Irish Women's Suffrage Federation, echoed Duggan's thoughts on militancy, but she differed in her view on petitioning.[514] Invoking Irish patriotism – but not necessarily Nationalism – she praised the success of British women in getting councils to pass 217 resolutions of support and claimed that 'it is nothing short of a disgrace that' they could 'only show seven in

[509] Murphy, *The Women's Suffrage Movement,* p. 38.
[510] *The Irish Citizen,* 16 Jan. 1915, p. 267
[511] Ibid.
[512] Ibid.
[513] Ryan, *Winning the Vote for Women,* p. 26.
[514] *The Irish Citizen,* 11 Jul. 1914, p. 61.

Ireland.'[515] Despite the fact that this had not worked for the IWFL in the past, Mellone still believed it was one of the best constitutional methods; demonstrating how strongly some suffragists felt about utilising peaceful methods. Similarly, she criticised the lacklustre suffrage campaign in Ireland, noting that 'it is nothing short of a disgrace that against the long list of women's organisations in Great Britain which have petitioned for suffrage, we can show just nothing at all in Ireland.' [516] Despite her strong views, Mellone did concede that militants benefitted from the publicity they obtained.[517] Mellone therefore advised talking to members of the public at every opportunity, to hand out leaflets and write to the local newspapers and for suffrage societies to work harder to gain 'expressions of opinion from every public body within their reach.'[518] Mellone offers a closer inspection on the militant versus constitutionalist debate as she appeared to believe that it was not the case that constitutional methods had failed, but that women were not working hard enough to ensure they succeeded.

Debates over petitioning show that the militancy versus constitutionalism distinction was more fluid, complicated and blurred. Notably, even some members of the IWFL did not support militancy. Mary Hayden, who was non-militant, believed that 'though some condemned petitions as futile, they were often valuable instruments of propaganda, reaching as they did a wide circle and helping to form public opinion.'[519] Mary Hayden had also been previously involved in the DWSA/IWSLGA, which possibly influenced her positive views on petitioning as a campaign method. As examined in chapter two, acts of militancy by suffragettes were often criticised by constitutionalist organisations such as the IWSLGA. Yet, many non-militants frequently refused to condemn the

[515] Ibid.
[516] Ibid.
[517] Ibid.
[518] Ibid.
[519] *The Irish Citizen*, 18 Dec. 1915, p. 197.

militant organisations, even while criticising their methods. Hayden's comments are an example of a member of a militant organisation who supported the use of traditional tactics like petitioning. This proves that the lines which supposedly separated militancy and constitutionalism were not clearly defined.

Some supporters of the suffrage movement believed that petitioning had value for women in particular. Laurence Housman, a member of the Men's League for Women's Suffrage, argued that petitioning had not lost its worth to women.[520] Housman refuted the idea that petitioning directed toward 'Minsters in the past and when directed toward the throne today' was an act of militancy. He instead argued that 'there are many who believe, on the contrary, that it is an act essentially constitutional in character, who believe also that the insistence of women upon their right of personal petition is the most active form of constitutional agitation left to them.'[521] As Houseman realised, petitioning had a particular value for women because even if they were handing them in aggressively, it was still constitutional. Therefore, the right to petition was a form of political agitation that could benefit women, as it was a constitutional act that could be used in a militant way.

The nature of petitioning, and views on it, continued to change, which can be best demonstrated through the debates over Labour MP Phillip Snowden's suggested amendment to clause 9 of the 1912 Home Rule Bill. Snowden proposed granting women who qualified as municipal electors the right to vote for the Irish Parliament envisaged by the legislation. [522] The NUWSS, now allied with the Labour party, backed this amendment to highlight the Irish Party's prioritisation of Home Rule over women's suffrage. [523] As a result of this, Frederick Ryan, an

[520] *Votes for Women,* 22 May. 1914, p. 515.
[521] Ibid.
[522] Leslie Hume, *The National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies, 1897-1914* (New York, 1982), p. 167.
[523] Ibid, p. 168.

Irish suffrage sympathiser and socialist, encouraged women to sign a 'monster petition' to the House of Commons in support of the Snowden Amendment.[524] He claimed that this petition should be different from 'vague and indefinite appeals' by directly supporting an amendment.[525] The petition would be evidence, Ryan argued, that would counter the Nationalist press's narrative that 'women do not want the vote.'[526] As this demonstrates, petitions did not merely appeal to authority but also to a wider public, including the press, in seeking to counter claims of indifference. This shows how petitioning could still prove useful to suffrage activists, particularly during a period of time when Home Rule dominated political discussion and women struggled to have their voices heard.

This petition, as suggested by Ryan, illustrated the changing nature of suffrage petitioning. Ryan was quick to stipulate that this should not be a 'recklessly-signed document, the signatures of which are too numerous to be verified or checked'. At the same time, he claimed that 'lightly signed' petitions were less valuable than targeted ones representing a particular group.[527] Ryan proposed an Irish petition signed by leading and representative women such as graduates, doctors, artists, journalists, those involved in local government and a list of other women in respectable and public roles within society. [528] Ryan's claim that obtaining such signatures 'would, in this case, carry sufficient weight' is an example of a trend observed by Henry Miller, whereby campaigners switched to targeted demonstrations of support from specific groups of petitioners.[529] This method was used in some cases to ground their claims 'to significance on the expertise of the signatories.'[530] Ryan also encouraged the involvement of all

[524] *The Irish Citizen,* 10 Aug. 1912, p. 90.
[525] Ibid.
[526] Ibid.
[527] Ibid.
[528] *The Irish Citizen,* 10 Aug. 1912, p. 90.
[529] Miller, 'Practice of petitioning', p. 13.
[530] Ibid.

suffrage bodies in Ireland, militant and non-militant and since 'the cost of such a petition would be small, and it is a work which so far from raising differences as to method and tactics, would emphatically bring into line every woman suffragist in Ireland.'[531] Ryan's article revealed the continued importance of class within suffragism of the early twentieth century, as the signatures of educated women and those who held positions in public life, were deemed more valuable than those who were not.

While there is no evidence to show that Ryan's proposal actually went anywhere, it still sparked debate about the continued relevance of petitioning within Irish suffragism. Its reception actually reveals the criticisms made of petitioning within the suffrage movement at this time. In August 1912, the *Irish Citizen* invited suffragists to offer their opinions on the petition.[532] Though it asked for 'friendly suggestions' the author did not show much faith in petitioning, agreeing with the 'parliamentary correspondent' who wrote that 'petitions are played out; nobody in Parliament pays the slightest heed to them.'[533] Blanche Bennett, the Honorary Secretary of the Irish Women's Suffrage Society in Belfast (IWSS), which was an organisation that 'leant towards militancy', offered her views to the paper.[534] She admitted to having 'little faith in the efficacy of petitions' but she felt that a petition signed by representative Irishwomen 'would certainly be an effective answer to the anti-suffragist assertion that women do not want the vote.' [535] She further believed that it would be a means of bringing both militant and non-militants together in mutual co-operation.[536] Overall, those who responded to the *Irish Citizen's* request for opinions, displayed little enthusiasm for petitioning in general, but conceded that

[531] *The Irish Citizen,* 10 Aug. 1912, p. 90.
[532] *The Irish Citizen,* 3 Aug. 1912, p. 81.
[533] Ibid.
[534] Diane Urquhart, 'The Ulster Suffrage Movement', p. 275.
[535] *The Irish Citizen,* 24 Aug. 1912, p. 109.
[536] Ibid.

Ryan's scheme had some merits. For example, Dr Mary Strangman, Honorary Secretary of the Waterford Branch of Munster Women's Franchise League (MWFL), thought that the idea was 'a good one', because whilst 'petitions generally seem useless as a political instrument, this one, signed exclusively by those suggested, might yet have some weight with the House of Commons.'[537] Even though these women had little faith in petitioning as a campaign method, they could see value in a collective petition that could potentially gain attention in Parliament.

Other activists who responded to the *Irish Citizen* were more critical. Hannah Sheehy Skeffington bluntly stated that she had no faith in this 'time worn method' as the IWFL 'tested its potency again and again' without results.[538] The petition was not 'practical politics' as although it might influence individual Irish MPs, they would inevitably cast their vote 'as heretofore, in obedience to the exigencies of Party.'[539] The language deployed here demonstrates how some suffrage activists simply did not believe in dedicating anymore of their time to petitioning. This suggests that the act of petitioning was, for some campaigners, more performative rather than 'practical' in producing results. In the end, despite Ryan's suggestions, there is no evidence that a monster petition was submitted. Regardless of this, the debates over the best way to support Snowden's amendment reveal a pessimism and apathy regarding the value of petitioning. Yet, as this section has demonstrated, even if women were disillusioned with petitioning, they still accepted that it was one of the few tactics available to them. Even some "militant" campaigners were willing to support certain petitions.

[537] Ibid.
[538] *The Irish Citizen*, 31 Aug. 1912, p. 18.
[539] Ibid.

Performative petitioning

Although suffrage activists began to turn away from traditional forms of petitioning to Parliament, they continued to petition in other ways. As noted earlier, petitioning could be a very effective form of attracting publicity, as militants themselves recognised on occasion. Henry Miller has found that 'petitioning underpinned many of the "eye-catching events" organised in Westminster by militants that were designed to attract publicity.'[540] Even if their petition was not accepted by Parliament, the process of petitioning in large numbers would still apply pressure to the government. Performance petitioning was utilised often by the WSPU, but in 1911, there was an event that allowed both Irish and British activists to participate. This was the presentation of a suffrage petition by the Dublin Lord Mayor, John J. Farrell, to Parliament in 1911. This was a unique method of petitioning as only the Lord Mayors of London and Dublin had the exceptional right to present their petitions in person.[541] This petition offers an insight into the nature of performance petitioning and how it was utilised by militants.

The presentation of this petition required co-operation between Irish and British suffrage activists and it showcases an instance where relations between Irish and British suffragettes were at their strongest, despite the Home Rule tensions that simmered in the background given the Unionism of many members of both the WSPU and NUWSS. In addition to this, Diane Urquhart has found that the Irish suffrage movement itself experienced divisions due to the 'external pressures due to the mounting home rule crisis from 1912.'[542] The IPP's outright opposition to women's suffrage placed the IWFL in an awkward position. The IWFL's leaders were Nationalist in sympathy and did not condemn the campaign

[540] Miller, 'Practice of petitioning', p. 9.
[541] *Votes for Women,* 19 May. 1911, p. 544.
[542] Urquhart, 'The Ulster Suffrage Movement', pp. 277-278.

to secure Home Rule, despite the difficulties it caused for the suffrage campaign in Ireland. For their part, the WSPU's overriding priority was suffrage and Margaret Ward has rightly argued that they were not 'interested in the intricacies of the Irish situation.'[543] This attitude would become a strain between the sister movements. Despite this tension, Irish and British suffragettes continued to work together and support one another in their cause. Unlike earlier suffrage organisations, the IWFL was not a sub-branch of their British counterparts. The IWFL and WSPU were separate organisations but did co-operate with one another. For example, the IWFL often welcomed 'charismatic' British speakers such as Emmeline Pankhurst.[544] Hannah Sheehy Skeffington corresponded regularly with WSPU members such as leader Sylvia Pankhurst.[545]

This Lord Mayor's petition demonstrated how the IWFL found new ways to physically petition parliament and use a rare ceremonial performance to get attention for the campaign in a new way. Petitions were still used to publicise an issue, which was important given the context in which Home Rule dominated much political coverage. This petition was organised by the IWFL and they requested that the Lord Mayor of Dublin would represent them, which was approved by the city council.[546] The council ordered that the Lord Mayor, accompanied by several civic officers and his wife, would go to London.[547] Farrell was a Catholic and a member of the IPP, which shows how the IWFL and WSPU were able to put aside their embittered feelings regarding the Home Rule issue in order to organise this event. Despite the position of his party on the matter of suffrage, Farrell made it clear he was a suffrage supporter.[548] Farrell's wife, Mary Josephine Farrell, was later referred to in the *Irish Citizen* as a 'good friend of the

[543] Ward, 'Conflicting Interests', p. 133.
[544] Murphy, *The Women's Suffrage Movement,* p. 63.
[545] Ibid, p. 65.
[546] *The Irish Citizen,* 19 Sep. 1914, p. 137.
[547] *The Irish Citizen,* 30 Nov. 1912, p. 221.
[548] *The Irish Citizen,* 20 Dec. 1913, p. 250.

cause' who was enthusiastically supportive of this petition and a 'valuable' member of the IWFL.[549] This may explain the origins of the plan, and it certainly shows that the request to the Mayor was far from spontaneous or speculative.

This plan succeeded in attracting particular press coverage, of what might otherwise have been viewed as just another petition to parliament. The *London Daily News* referred to the event as a 'picturesque and somewhat rare spectacle.'[550] The petition presentation was treated as a commemorative occasion and upon arriving in London the Lord Mayor and his wife were greeted by WSPU leaders, such as Emmeline Pankhurst and Emmeline Pethick-Lawrence. A mug was also presented to Mary Farrell as a souvenir gift for her child from the British activists.[551] Mary Farrell's 'kind and gentle' disposition was said to have won the hearts of the women on this occasion.[552] The WSPU ensured to provide the Lord Mayor with a large and celebratory welcome, as part of building up the spectacle of the event.[553] The event was recorded, in enhanced detail, in *Votes for Women* as the author referred to the event as a 'simple act' which took only a few minutes but was a 'symbol of the great weight of public opinion behind the demand for the passage of the Conciliation Bill.'[554] The importance of the event to women was further emphasized by the *London Daily News* as it reported that many of the topics for Parliament that day involved women's issues such as maternity. The women found it ridiculous that a male legislature would impose legislation on those whom, they contended, remained unrepresented.[555] In support of the petition, '150 suffragettes assembled outside the House' and cheered for Farrell and his colleagues.[556] The spectacle of women gathering

[549] *The Irish Citizen,* 19 Sep. 1914, p. 137.
[550] *London Daily News,* 13 May. 1911, p. 8.
[551] *The Irish Citizen,* 19 Sep. 1914, p. 137.
[552] Ibid.
[553] *Votes for Women,* 19 May. 1911, p. 544.
[554] Ibid.
[555] *London Daily News,* 13 May, 1911. p. 8.
[556] Ibid.

outside was as much a part of the news event as the presentation inside. This provided an opportunity for the suffragettes to 'perform' to the public.

Further demonstrating the unifying effect this petition had on the suffrage movement, a large dinner was held afterwards which saw the attendance of suffrage leaders from across the militant-constitutionalist divide. These included Christabel Pankhurst, Millicent Garrett Fawcett and Lady Constance Lytton among many others. Emmeline Pankhurst gave a speech in which she expressed their gratitude to the Lord Mayor and how proud they were to host him. [557] The WSPU would even later report they were very pleased and a 'happy impression' was made on them by the actions of John Farrell.[558] They praised the Dublin corporation for supporting great causes such as suffrage. Pankhurst recalled meeting Farrell sometime before and how he expressed his desire to present the petition, not only as Lord Mayor but as a sympathiser of the suffrage movement. Pankhurst believed that an 'Irishman who believed in Women Suffrage came as near to being a perfect human being as it was possible for anyone to be!'[559] This was significant given the anger the WSPU felt when Irish members refused to support women's suffrage being included on the Home Rule Bill.[560]

This event demonstrated the way in which a radical suffrage group could subvert an ancient constitutional privilege to provide a spectacular news event for a press accustomed to regular mass petitioning. It also shows how the IWFL sought to work locally with an IPP member who disagreed with John Redmond's anti-suffrage parliamentary stance. Indeed, Farrell spoke of the duty of Irish men to support the liberty of women, especially those who say they respect their wives, mothers or sisters. He referred to the 'Mother of Parliaments' and asked that this pillar of 'liberty' not reduce itself to 'the position of a serio-comic

[557] *Votes for Women*, 19 May. 1911, p. 544.
[558] *The Irish Citizen*, 26 Oct. 1912, p. 178.
[559] *Votes for Women*, 19 May. 1911, p. 544.
[560] Ward, 'Conflicting Interests', p. 131.

Assembly, existing only for the purpose of deceiving those who elected it.' [561] He supported the passing of Home Rule, but if it did not 'secure liberty for women, the fight would only be half won and the victory hardly worth the taking.'[562] This is valuable evidence of how some Nationalists did indeed regard women's enfranchisement as part of Home Rule, rather than a distraction from it. It is also likely that the Dublin Corporation supported the petition as they were conscious of women voting in local elections, even if they were still denied the parliamentary franchise. In this case, the petition was celebrated as a political process, but the next section shows that this is not always the case.

Petitions and protests

Militancy and petitioning continued to be debated by suffrage activists, particularly following the imprisonment of suffragettes. Some militant actions saw suffragettes imprisoned, first beginning with the WSPU in Great Britain and later the IWFL too. In the case of imprisoned Irish suffragettes, William Murphy has found that while scholarship has elevated their role in studies on suffrage it has not fully emphasised their role in the narrative of political imprisonment in Ireland.[563] Irish women, including Margaret Cousins, were also imprisoned in English prisons on multiple occasions for supporting WSPU activities.[564] Irish women 'saw nothing wrong with using English knowledge and techniques to further their cause at home.'[565] This was certainly the case as seen on 13 June 1912, when Hannah Sheehy Skeffington, Margaret Murphy, Jane Murphy, Marguerite Palmer, Majorie Hasler, Kathleen Houston, Maud Lloyd and Hilda

[561] *Votes for Women,* 19 May. 1911, p. 544.
[562] Ibid.
[563] William Murphy, 'Suffragettes and the Transformation of Political Imprisonment in Ireland, 1912-1914' in Louise Ryan and Margaret Ward (eds.), *Irish Women and the Vote: Becoming Citizens* (Revised edition, Dublin, 2018), p. 115.
[564] Ibid.
[565] Murphy, *The Women's Suffrage Movement,* p. 68.

Webb all threw stones at the windows of various government offices in Dublin and were arrested and imprisoned.

Petitioning was used in conjunction with these radical and militant actions, outside the traditional niceties of parliamentary submissions. An example of this occurred in England in July 1913, when a woman threw a petition into the King's carriage on the way to Royal Agricultural Show in Bristol. While exercising the traditional right to petition the monarch, her means of delivery was recognised as a revolutionary act in press reports, such as that of the *Irish Citizen*.[566] An even more controversial example occurred on 18 July 1912 when Herbert Asquith visited John Redmond in Dublin and the WSPU sent over Mary Leigh, Gladys Evans and Lizzie Baker to protest his visit. Leigh threw a hatchet into the carriage that carried Asquith and Redmond.[567] Leigh claimed that she 'put' the hatchet into the carriage as a 'symbolic method of bringing her petition to Mr Asquith's notice.'[568] The hatchet acted as a symbol of petitioning which was, in this case, used to perform militant action.

Where women were convicted of criminal acts of protest, such as these, petitioning might still play a part in efforts to attract sympathy for their punishment and the wider cause. Baker was given a sentence of 7 months, but was later released early due to ill health resulting from a hunger-strike, while Leigh and Evans were then convicted of conspiracy, arson and explosives charges and were given five years' penal servitude each in Mountjoy Jail in Ireland.[569] The women were not convicted as political prisoners and they immediately went on hunger strike and sent memorials to the Lord Lieutenant, Lord Aberdeen, to protest this.[570] Petitions became a method for these prisoners

[566] *The Irish Citizen,* 11 July. 1913, p. 611.
[567] Murphy, 'Suffragettes and the Transformation of Political Imprisonment', p. 119.
[568] *The Irish Citizen,* 31 December, 1912. p. 242.
[569] Murphy, 'Suffragettes and the Transformation of Political Imprisonment', p. 120.
[570] *Irish Independent,* 20 Aug. 1912, p. 5.

to protest for political status and for their sympathisers to support them from the outside.

These petitions protested against the ill treatment and force-feeding of hunger-striking suffrage activists who wished to receive political prisoner status. Being treated better than common criminals was of great concern to imprisoned suffragettes as they wished to be recognised as political prisoners for their actions. The women 'had not committed their crimes for personal gain but for a cause which they believed would eventually improve the nation' and they continually insisted that 'they were different and were in prison for political reasons.'[571] As Mary Leigh and Gladys Evans undertook a hunger-strike, this led to their being force fed by authorities. Force-feeding was a deeply violent act as it involved forcing a tube down the nose or throat of a woman, oftentimes involving the use of a steel gag to force the mouth open.[572] The *Irish Citizen* regularly reported on the grim reality of force-feeding and even the *Eye Witness,* an anti-suffrage paper, regarded force-feeding as 'a form of torture, insulting to human dignity'.[573] Petitioning was utilised by both suffragists and suffragettes to protest the violence of force-feeding and it gave women an outlet through which to vent their frustrations with force-feeding, which provoked both militant and non-militant women.

During these hunger strikes the Irish administration 'was inundated with petitions from Ireland and Britain, seeking the release of the women or the granting of political status.'[574] The issue of force-feeding evoked particularly passionate responses from prisoner supporters. One notable example of this was a petition organised by Mary Gawthorpe. Gawthorpe was a suffragette and had

[571] Murphy, *The Women's Suffrage Movement,* p. 97.
[572] Purvis, *Emmeline Pankhurst,* p. 134.
[573] As cited in *The Irish Citizen,* 28 Sep. 1912, p. 149.
[574] Murphy, 'Suffragettes and the Transformation of Political Imprisonment', p. 120.

been an active leading member of the WSPU from 1906-1911.[575] Despite committing militant acts, such as breaking a window of the Home Office, her views changed in 1912 as she did not agree with the escalation of militancy and opposed personal-physical violence.[576] Gawthrope wished to organise a petition signed by men and women who opposed this new era of militancy, but who also recognised that the 'retaliation of forcible feeding is a grave aggravation of the difficulties faced by authorities when dealing with women like Mrs Leigh.' [577] The petition argued that the sentences given to Leigh and Evans were disproportionate and that their actions were not done out of selfishness but in furtherance of the cause of women's enfranchisement.[578] This petition was supported by Irish suffrage activists and was consistently reported on in the *Irish Citizen*, as this section will demonstrate.

This petition signified a change in approaches to petitioning as rather than presenting it to Parliament, the petition would be sent to Liberal MP, Augustine Birrell, who was also the Chief Secretary of Ireland and Lord Aberdeen, the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland.[579] This was part of a phenomenon of moving away from Parliament and a reinvention of petitioning regarding the prisoner justice process by directly petitioning those responsible for law and order, such as the Lord Lieutenant. This was a method already used by convicts of the nineteenth century and one which suffrage prisoners were now turning to.[580] The IWRL sought to undertake work 'as complementary' to Gawthorpe's petition by writing letters about forcible feeding to the Lord Lieutenant, the Chairman of the

[575] Krista Cowman, 'A Footnote in History? Mary Gawthorpe, Sylvia Pankhurst, The Suffragette Movement and the Writing of Suffragette History', *Women's History Review,* 14: 3-4 (2005), p. 447.
[576] Cowman 'The Suffragette Movement', p. 450-451.
[577] *The Irish Citizen,* 14 Sep. 1912, p. 133.
[578] *The Irish Citizen,* 28 Sep. 1912, p. 153.
[579] *Daily Herald,* 14 Sep. 1912, p. 2.
[580] Kim Price, 'Time to Write: Convict Petitions in the 19th Century', *Family & Community History,* 22:1 (2019), p. 22.

Prison's Board and all heads of legal professions in Dublin.[581] They also decided to obtain the names of 'leading Dublin citizens' especially 'those in legal and medical professions' and to send this list of names to the heads of the Government and the legal authorities of Ireland.[582] In 1913 they also presented a petition with 188 signatures against force feeding, but it was not mentioned in the *Irish Citizen* to what authority this was presented.[583] Nonetheless, this petition shows that in addition to supporting Gawthorpe, the IWRL were also organising their own protests to generate publicity in opposition to force-feeding. The decision by suffrage activists to petition these authorities directly, rather than presenting a petition to the Commons, indicated a loss in confidence with more traditional methods of petitioning.

Gawthorpe's petition had the desired effect of attracting attention and publicity to the issue of Leigh and Evan's imprisonment and the issue of force-feeding across the UK. The petition gathered 'well over' 1,700 signatures and even following the release of Leigh and Evans the petition still gathered another 1000 additional names.[584] The *Newcastle Daily Chronicle* reported that the women were released due to their ill health and that the decision followed 'closely upon the petition promoted by Miss Mary Gawthorpe.'[585] It cannot be determined how far this petition in particular tipped the scales in favour of release, but notably this newspaper claimed it did, which suggests the petition did indeed have some influence, at least on the public. The petition generated support and discussion across the UK, with the IWFL in particular using their paper the *Irish Citizen* to publicise the opinions of various professionals such as university professors, as well as various Labour MPs such as George Lansbury and Phillip Snowden who

[581] *The Irish Citizen,* 19 Oct. 1912, p. 173.
[582] Ibid.
[583] *The Irish Citizen,* 10 Jan. 1914, p. 268.
[584] *Nottingham Evening Post,* 28 Oct. 1912, p. 5.
[585] *Newcastle Daily Chronicle,* 4 Oct. 1912, p. 2.

believed force feeding was 'an abominable outrage'.[586] The *Irish Citizen* reported that this support showed how widespread was 'the feeling of indignation at the treatment of' Leigh and Evans, and 'how fully enlightened public opinion, quite regardless of its attitude towards the act for which they were published, endorsed the plea which we put forward.' [587] This was very much a UK-wide campaign that included suffrage activists in Ireland, who were equally invested in protesting against force-feeding.

Prison petitions also allowed Irish suffrage activists to show support for their WSPU counterparts, who were treated differently in regards to their imprisonment. As mentioned earlier, on 13 June 1912, Hannah Sheehy Skeffington, Margaret Murphy, Jane Murphy, Marjorie Hasler, Kathleen Houston, Maud Lloyd and Hilda Webb were arrested for throwing stones to break the windows of government houses in Dublin. Skeffington, Palmer and the Murphy's received a two-month sentence and would be considered ordinary prisoners, but with special privileges, while the other women received six months and were immediately treated as 'first class misdemeanants.'[588] WSPU prisoners Lizzie Baker, Gladys Evans and Mary Leigh were imprisoned soon after in Mountjoy on 19 July 1912 and were given harsher sentences than their IWFL counterparts and as noted earlier were not granted any privileges or political prisoner status due to the severity of their crimes. This sparked anger on the part of Irish suffrage activists, as well as IWFL members in Mountjoy, who wished to see their WSPU counterparts afforded political status. IWFL members subsequently sent memorials to the Lord Lieutenant in order to support the WSPU members.[589] Even members of the Jury which convicted the women signed a petition organised by 'independent sympathisers' as they agreed the sentences

[586] *The Irish Citizen,* 29 Sep. 1912, p. 149.
[587] Ibid.
[588] Murphy, 'Suffragettes and the Transformation of Political Imprisonment', pp. 116-118.
[589] *Irish Independent,* 20 Aug. 1912, p. 5.

were too harsh.[590] The IWFL did not, at first, support a hunger-strike but the Murphy's were insistent that they do so and eventually also partook in hunger-striking without approval from the IWFL, but Sheehy Skeffington and Palmer joined soon after.[591] The disparity between how the IWFL and WSPU prisoners were treated added fuel to the fire despite the fact the WSPU women's charges were far more serious. This sparked protests and petitions from many Irish suffrage activists.

Petitioning allowed Irish suffrage activists to support the WSPU in a way that was less controversial than joining in on hunger-strikes or WSPU protests in Ireland. This would prove useful as the IWFL was hesitant to associate with these protests organised by Sylvia Pankhurst, which was, according to Margaret Ward, 'an indication of IWFL reluctance to initiate a manifestly unpopular demonstration.'[592] The WSPU's presence in Ireland thus lead to the situation 'becoming very delicate and Irish suffragists were finding themselves having to tread a difficult path in attempting to keep public support.'[593] Margaret Cousins instead petitioned the Lord Lieutenant and requested that WSPU members be treated as political prisoners. She collected 2,700 names, with signatures from as far afield as Cork, Belfast, Limerick, Armagh, Portarlington, England and New York, showing the widespread support for the prisoners.[594] The petition also included the names of members 'of nobility, doctors, actors and magistrates as well as members of the working classes'; showing how support for this petition cut across social class which differed from previous suffragette petitions examined in this chapter. These findings were published as part of an address to the Lord Lieutenant in the *Freeman's Journal* and it is possible that the IWFL may

[590] *The Irish Citizen,* 9 Nov. 1912, p. 194.
[591] Murphy, 'Suffragettes and the Transformation of Political Imprisonment', p. 121.
[592] Ward, 'Conflicting interests', p. 135.
[593] Ward, 'Conflicting interests', p. 135.
[594] *Freeman's Journal,* 17 Sep. 1912, p. 5.

have had an interest in playing up the diversity of signatures beyond the actual frequency of signatures.

This petition organised by Margaret Cousins, resulted in a back and forth between Cousins, as representative of the IWFL, and Lord Aberdeen. It provided Cousins with an opportunity to directly address the Lord Lieutenant and provide public pressure through newspaper coverage. The petitioners requested that he grant their petition or release the women as he had in the case of the Peamount Sanatorium prisoners.[595] According to the IWFL, the Lord Lieutenant claimed he did not have the power to 'confer first class privileges on convicts'.[596] This was due to the fact that their sentences as hard labour and penal servitude prisoners did not grant them the right to be considered for political status.[597] Cousins, however, questioned the validity of his claim asking 'is it not true, however, that your Excellency does possess the power to reduce a penal sentence to one of simple imprisonment, in which case the first class privileges could be granted to the English prisoners which Irish prisoners now enjoy?' and Cousins continued to collect a further 662 names for the petition.[598] There was evidently still enthusiasm to continue signing the petition and to publicly question the Lord Lieutenant.

This petition even allowed Cousins to issue a direct and public threat to the Lord Lieutenant. As Leigh had been released early due to ill health in September 1912, the petitioners also demanded that Evans should be released due to her weakened state. If this was not done, or if forcible feeding was not stopped, Cousins threatened that they would 'see that the matter is raised, not only upon the re-opening or parliament but at Irish public functions whenever

[595] Ibid.
[596] *Freeman's Journal,* 26 Sep. 1912, p. 5.
[597] Murphy, 'Suffragettes and the Transformation of Political Imprisonment', p. 120.
[598] *Freeman's Journal,* 26 Sep. 1912, p. 5.

your Excellency appears.'[599] It is noteworthy that this petition used threatening language, if phrased in a way that permitted some plausible deniability. Petitioning itself, then, could be used as a form of militancy as it could be used to get across serious threats to the recipient and demonstrate the frustration of the petitioner. It appeared that the Lord Lieutenant recognised this threat as on 12 October 1912, rather than reply to Cousins, he instead responded to a petition that had been sent by the IWRL on 17 September 1912 and pointedly noted that he appreciated the 'temperate manner' in which the petition was expressed and claimed it was more effective.[600] Through this statement, the Lord Lieutenant seemed to be suggesting that constitutional forms of protest would carry more weight than militancy. He also incredibly claimed that force feeding 'has been administered with the utmost care and solicitude.'[601] This demonstrated a disregard for the claims by suffragettes that force-feeding was violent and traumatising. He did however agree to the release of Evans.[602] This was a result for petitioners drawing attention to the women's plight, and despite his protestations, it is not clear that the temperate petitions had more impact than those with immoderate language. Petitions to the Lord Lieutenant would continue to be sent on behalf of newly imprisoned Irish and English suffragettes who were not granted political status in 1913, demonstrating how this was the main weapon in the suffrage movement's arsenal when it came to defending imprisoned suffragettes.[603]

Denominational suffrage petitioning

Petitioning, combined with religious rhetoric, was utilised in the campaign tactics of Irish religious suffrage societies, such as the Church League for Women's

[599] Ibid.
[600] *The Irish Citizen,* 12 Oct. 1912, p. 167.
[601] Ibid.
[602] Ibid.
[603] *The Irish Citizen,* 15 Feb. 1913, p. 306.

Suffrage Ireland (CLWSI, Church of Ireland) which was formed in 1913 and the Irish Catholic Women's Suffrage Association (ICWSA) which formed later in 1915. These societies followed in the footsteps of the British Church League of Women's Suffrage, an Anglican organisation formed in 1913 that sought to combine 'the women's movement with Christian mission'.[604] Margaret Lillie Stack, the Honorary Secretary of the CLWSI, urged suffrage activists to join religious societies in addition to their current memberships and E.A. Browning of the IWRL emphasised 'the power of prayer to help forward reform.'[605] Hannah Sheehy Skeffington, however, dissented and argued against 'women joining sectarian leagues' on the ground that 'such an action would be narrowing and would lead to the setting up of new barriers.'[606] Skeffington's argument is notable given the fact that women were united by their desire for women's franchise, but suffrage activists were also aware of how they were divided on other issues, such as party alliances and perhaps especially in the Irish context, religion. Religious societies such as the Church League employed 'a conservative rhetoric of domesticity' and women like Skeffington, who was an atheist, were already abandoning 'traditional views on womanhood.' [607] This was due to the fact that they felt they had views on religion which did not conform with the views of the established churches in Ireland. The creation of denominational Irish suffrage societies, tied together by their religion, could risk setting up further barriers between them and associations, such as the IWFL, that did not support religious associations. Through the examination of petitions organised by denominational societies, it is possible to re-examine women's suffrage from the standpoint of religion and how it affected the Irish campaign.

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[604] Saunders, 'Religious Routes to Women's Suffrage', p. 1472.
[605] *The Irish Citizen*, 8 Nov. 1913, p. 208.
[606] Ibid.
[607] Murphy, *The Women's Suffrage Movement*, p. 140; Saunders, 'Religious Routes to Women's Suffrage', p. 1501.

In 1913, the CLWSI worked alongside the Church of Ireland to organise a suffragist petition, with the aim of showing clerical support for the movement. This was signed by bishops and clergy and sent to the House of Commons in favour of votes for women.[608] The CLWSI undertook work within clerical circles to convince priests of the need for enfranchisement.[609] The petition protested the disenfranchisement of women due to the attempt to 'obscure the spiritual equality of the sexes which is an essential tenement of the Christian Faith.'[610] The petition continued to employ religious rhetoric and rely on the theme of women as guiders of 'our judgement' and how they would 'operate in favour of much needed moral and social reform.'[611] It also emphasised that reform could not continue to happen unless women were given 'a voice in concerns about which they have admittedly expert knowledge.'[612] This petition stressed the belief of some suffrage activists and the church leaders that women were moral leaders within society. This shows continuity between this idea and movements covered in earlier chapters and is a recurrent theme found in the introduction of women into public political pressure groups. The efforts to demonstrate clerical support hoped to counter the perception that all, or at least a majority, of priests opposed women's enfranchisement. For example, a Catholic Priest Father Cleary supported suffrage as he believed that they would bring more religious feeling into the state, while Father D. Barry opposed women getting the vote as 'allowing women the right of suffrage is incompatible with the catholic ideal of unity of domestic life.'[613] The petitions therefore sought to signal that faith and suffragism were far from incompatible.

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[608] *The Irish Citizen,* 20 Sep. 1913, p. 146.
[609] *The Irish Citizen,* 27 Sep. 1913, p. 155.
[610] *The Irish Citizen,* 20 Sep. 1913, p. 146.
[611] Ibid.
[612] *The Irish Citizen,* 20 Sep. 1913, p. 146.
[613] As cited in Owens, *A Social History of Women,* p. 99.

Petitions to religious figures emphasized the complicated relationship between the Catholic and Anglican churches and women, as women did not just petition in support of suffrage, but also to be recognised as equals in the vestry. This demonstrates parallels with the suffrage movement, as these women were also asking for some level of governance within the Church itself. Cliona Murphy has argued that the Church, however, demonstrated some hypocrisy when it spoke of them as superior but did not allow them any share in the direct running of the Catholic church.[614] Women in Anglican churches were also rejected, for example, as the General Synod of the Church of Ireland rejected a petition requesting that its women-members should become vestry women.[615] The New Testament was cited against allowing it but the Bishop of Ossory said women would continue to work for the Church of Ireland. By this, it was clearly meant that women could work for the Church as laity but could not become officially included as part of the vestry. This angered the women who claimed that 'this petition was organised by respectable and most influential ladies' and 'they relied upon quiet, womanly work well done to win their way.'[616] In the cases of both the Catholic Church and the Church of Ireland, they 'wished to see women enfranchised more from a belief in their 'goodness' than in their equality.'[617] While members of the church were willing to support the concept of suffrage, they were not willing to allow women to become directly involved in church matters. Just as the suffrage movement petitioned for equality in Parliament, these women were additionally campaigning for equality within the church.

While the CLWSI received support from the Church of Ireland it was clear that for various church figures their sympathy would only go so far. For example, in 1913 Charles T. Ovenden, the Anglican Dean of St Patrick's

[614] Murphy, *The Women's Suffrage Movement*, p. 156.
[615] *The Irish Citizen*, 9 May. 1914, p. 401.
[616] Ibid.
[617] Murphy, *The Women's Suffrage Movement*, p. 156.

Cathedral in Dublin, refused to hold a service for suffragette prisoners. This prompted the CLWSI to organise a petition against the decision in October 1913.[618] This petition was subsequently 'signed by 57 dignitaries and clergy and over 1,300 laity of the Church of Ireland.'[619] The petition reflected upon the member's strong desire to receive the support of the clergy, as the petitioners claimed that it was only natural that 'its adherents should wish to ask publicly for God's blessing and direction on the greatest moral movement the world has ever known.'[620] The CLWSI believed that the suffrage movement itself was moral and that this granted them the right to the Franchise and participation in political life and thus deserved the support of the clergy. This explains their anger at the Dean's refusal of support.

The Dean's response to this petition established boundaries around how much support the church could show for the suffrage movement. There was a difference between a figure, such as the Dean, showing sympathy to suffragists versus holding religious ceremonies specifically in the name of suffrage activists. The deputation wished to have this service in conjunction with a suffrage convention due to be held in Dublin that December. The Dean promised to give the petition careful consideration, however, while expressing sympathy towards anyone who wished to pray in St Patrick's Cathedral, he drew the line at holding 'a special service for one section only of members of the Church of Ireland-viz., the suffragists who have signed the petition.' [621] This would set a precedent for holding services for other groups, 'such as the anti-suffragists and many other societies.' [622] Subsequently, an article in the *Irish Citizen* called out the Dean's hypocrisy by questioning whether the Dean would also protest 'against those

[618] *The Irish Citizen,* 1 Nov. 1913, p. 195.
[619] Ibid.
[620] Ibid.
[621] Ibid.
[622] Ibid.

special services for Unionists, now so common.'[623] By indicating that he could not set a precedent for other groups, the Dean was claiming that women's suffrage was a political controversy, on which the Church could not be shown to be taking a side by holding a religious service in its honour.

In addition to this, militancy caused further complications as the Dean was displeased to find among the names of the CLWSI's petition was 'that of a militant "Suffragette" who was tried and convicted of having committed an outrage' and expressed disappointment that the society had declined to 'disavow or disassociate itself from the militant "suffragettes", whose crimes committed against many innocent persons have caused a widespread feeling of abhorrence among many members of the church.'[624] This statement made it clear that the CLWSI could not expect support from the Dean, while they themselves support militant actions. He finished by insisting that, notwithstanding his support for women ratepayers getting the vote, he would refuse to hold a service until militancy ceased, 'lest it be seen as an expression of sympathy on my part with crime.'[625] This demonstrates how merely associating with a militant organisation could have an effect on their non-militant counterparts, as seen similarly in chapter 2 with the IWSLGA losing members due to the activities of militant suffragettes. Militancy often drew negative reactions from different authorities, even when approached by constitutionalist petitioners.

The fallout of this petition exemplified the unity that existed between all Irish suffrage organisations as the CLWSI did not wish to condone nor condemn the militants. This is unsurprising as while the Church League in Britain took no official stance on militancy, its 'leadership drew disproportionately on the militant ranks' and numerous League members were affiliated with the WSPU.[626]

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[623] *The Irish Citizen,* 1 Nov. 1913, p. 189.
[624] *The Irish Citizen,* 1 Nov. 1913, p. 195.
[625] Ibid.
[626] Saunders, 'Religious Routes to Women's Suffrage', p. 1493.

Similar overlap was seen in Ireland, as the ICWSA was established by Mary Hayden, a non-militant member of the IWFL. Clearly militancy was not a dividing factor between religious societies and their militant counterparts. The CLWSI responded to the Dean in the *Irish Citizen* and claimed that he misunderstood the aims of the League, which was not to condemn other suffrage societies but to pursue 'corporate devotions', conference meetings and the publishing of literature.[627] The Dean's reference to militancy sparked outrage from suffragists and suffragettes alike and resulted in M. Alexander, a member of the IWSS in Northern Ireland, publishing an open letter in the *Irish Citizen* on 1 November 1913.[628] Alexander was incensed by the Dean's reference to being associated by crime but she was not surprised as 'it is just what one may expect from a clergyman.' Alexander's negative remark is indicative of how sceptical some suffrage activists still felt towards Church figures. Alexander claimed that 'had the churches stood for the political and economic equality to the sexes' then the need for militancy would never have arisen.[629] Despite the suffragettes' anger at the Dean for not allowing militants the opportunity for 'well-doing through prayer', they still commended and 'congratulated heartily' the CLWSI for organising the petition.[630] This petition, alongside the other petitions discussed in this section, demonstrate the similarities between suffrage groups, both militant and religious, who stood by one another despite their different outlooks.

Conclusion

This chapter has examined changes in the use of petitioning by suffragists and suffragettes, as a result of developments in the early twentieth-century suffrage movement. As militancy grew, attitudes to petitions changed but, in some ways, remained the same. While some militants grew weary of constitutional methods,

[627] *The Irish Citizen,* 1 Nov. 1913, p. 195.
[628] *The Irish Citizen,* 1 Nov. 1913, p. 193.
[629] Ibid.
[630] *The Irish Citizen,* 1 Nov. 1913, p. 189.

they still utilised petitioning as a campaign method. Women, however, grew frustrated with waiting for the franchise, especially after the IPP's prioritisation of the third Home Rule Bill in 1912 made the passing of women's suffrage unlikely. The women's battle for enfranchisement would grow complicated after the outbreak of the First World War in 1914. Henry Miller has found however that 'petitioning could sustain low-key, minimal and residual political activity during wartime.'[631] The battle for suffrage continued until 1918 when the Representation of the People Act was passed and allowed women over 30, who met the required property and residency requirements, to qualify to vote. Petitioning, in its innovative and even militant forms, continued to play a role in generating publicity for women's suffrage, even when many Irish Unionists and Nationalists wished to focus on the constitutional question of Home Rule.[632]

This chapter has utilised petitioning patterns and debates on petitioning to establish the prominent role petitioning played within the suffrage movement of the early twentieth century. This has proven that although there was this perceived dividing difference between militancy and constitutionalism, sometimes the two could amalgamate and work together. Members of militant groups supported large scale events that centred around petitioning, such as the Lord Mayor's petition to parliament. As with many political movements, the beliefs of those involved were not set in stone. Some supported militancy but only to a certain degree, as seen with Mary Gawthorpe. Militancy and constitutionalism shared a complex relationship and petitioning patterns of this period allow for a closer examination of this relationship and how it transformed in this period. In addition to this, this chapter has demonstrated how petitions could be utilised in different ways; whether to support militant women who committed crimes, or to support women with religious sentiments who wished to

[631] Miller, 'Practice of Petitioning', p. 21.
[632] Ibid.

remain closely involved in their church. Despite their differences, this chapter has shown that suffrage organisations formed a united front when it came to women's enfranchisement.

Petitions played an important role for non-militant sympathisers of suffragette prisoners, particularly as they could petition on their behalf without resorting to militant methods. On the other hand, militant movements also used petitions, as seen with the Lord Lieutenant, but they were used to convey serious threats if their demands were not met. This exposed how malleable petitions could be as they served both militant and constitutional purposes. Petitions were also central to the campaigns of denominational suffrage societies who could use this method to encourage the involvement of the clergy of their respective churches. It allowed them to pursue peaceful methods of agitation on members of the clergy without pursuing more controversial forms of protest, as seen when they attempted to convince the Dean of St. Patrick's Cathedral to hold a service in honour of suffrage. What can be surmised from all of these events is how central petitions were for both constitutional and militant suffrage organisations. Petitions did not die away, they continued to be used and to be debated and these petitioning patterns allow for a re-assessment of the development of the early twentieth-century suffrage movement.

Chapter four: The Dublin Women's Temperance Association: An Analysis of the Women's Temperance Movement in Ireland

The 1870s marked an increase in formalised involvement of women in the Irish temperance movement with the foundation of women's associations in Belfast and Dublin. This was a significant period of progress for the politicisation of middle-class, Protestant Irish women, as they joined women's temperance societies in order to influence Irish society to conform with their sober expectations of morality. Therefore, this chapter will focus on the work of women in Irish temperance, particularly the work of the Dublin Women's Temperance Association (DWTA), which was formed in 1874 and was led by Hanna Maria Wigham as president and Charlotte Edmundson as Honorary Secretary.[633] The DWTA's formation was influenced by the establishment of the Belfast Women's Temperance Association (BWTA) under Isabella Tod earlier that year.[634] As Maria Luddy has surmised, the temperance movement 'played a significant role in broadening women's perception of their role in society and also their part in the political process.'[635] This was certainly the case with DWTA as it encouraged women to join a moral, religious and social cause, such as temperance, which offered women opportunities in the public sphere under the guise of women's moral superiority, or 'women's mission'.

This chapter will examine the DWTA's temperance campaign in order to demonstrate how, through their work, this organisation contributed to the politicisation and growing independence of Irish women. This will be done by addressing how their work was heavily influenced by traditional feminine stereotypes and how this stereotype was utilised by temperance activists who believed women were best suited to influence domestic morality within Irish

[633] *British Women's Temperance Journal,* 1 Mar. 1887, p.35; SCPP, *Reports* (1892), p. 297.
[634] *Freeman's Journal,* 9 Dec. 1874 p. 1; *Northern Whig,* 6 Aug. 1894, p. 6.
[635] Luddy, *Women and Philanthropy,* p. 202.

society. The organisation was co-ordinated and directed by women, Charlotte Edmundson, for example, undertook the lion's share of secretarial work in the DWTA.[636] She also spoke at meetings and in 1896 was treated with 'affectionate regard' by the committee of the DWTA when they presented her with an 'illuminated address.'[637] Isabella Tod also regularly spoke at meetings and often voiced her thoughts on temperance through newspaper articles, as this chapter will examine. Men, as in other campaigns studied in this thesis, were also often present as speakers or chairs of their meetings.[638] Even so, women played a prominent role in the organisation, and used it to develop their own activity in the public sphere.

In contrast with the earlier period, the later Irish temperance movement has received less attention than English temperance or early Irish temperance movements, aside from Elizabeth Malcolm's work.[639] Apart from Luddy's contribution, there has also been little research into the ways that Irish women used temperance as a vehicle to participate in the public sphere.[640] Luddy has found that women's enthusiasm for the temperance cause 'waxed and waned' and it was not until the 1870s that 'Irishwomen really took up the issue with any degree of consistency.'[641] This did indeed change with the emergence of temperance societies and this chapter will offer a detailed case study of organisations, such as the DWTA and BWTA, and this will demonstrate how

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[636] *Irish Times,* 2 Feb. 1881, p. 8.
[637] *Freeman's Journal,* 31 Jan. 1896, p. 5.
[638] Reports of the early years of the DWTA do not mention a president but do mention Charlotte Edmundson as Honorary secretary by the *Freeman's Journal,* 3 Feb.1877, p. 7. Hanna Wigham is mentioned as vice president by the *Freeman's Journal,* 21 Dec. 1883, p. 4. This might have been a mistake. Wigham is referenced to as the President in the *Irish Independent,* 25 May. 1894, p. 6.
[639] For earlier period see: Colm Kerrigan, *Father Mathew and the Irish Temperance Movement, 1838-1849* (Cork, 1992); Paul A. Townsend, *Father Mathew, Temperance and Irish Identity* (Dublin, 2002); Elizabeth Malcolm, *"Ireland Sober, Ireland Free": Drink and Temperance in Nineteenth-century Ireland* (Syracuse, 1986), p. 176.
[640] Maria Luddy, *Women and Philanthropy in Nineteenth Century Ireland* (Cambridge, 1995); Maria luddy,'Isabella M S Tod' in Mary Cullen and Maria Luddy, *Women, Power and Consciousness in 19th Century Ireland* (1995, Dublin).
[641] Luddy, *Women and Philanthropy,* p. 204.

temperance activism aided in the politicisation of middle-class, Protestant Irish women. While men were not absent from these organisations, to dismiss the independence and agency of women activists 'ignores the very deep commitment and level of independent action undertaken by women temperance advocates in this country.'[642] Building on this insight, this chapter uses reports of DWTA meetings, as well as a closer examination of their campaign methods, to demonstrate how women took control by forming their own temperance societies and took on a leading role in their respective organisations. This chapter will contribute significantly to current studies on Irish temperance by providing a detailed examination of the DWTA's campaign, as this organisation has been neglected and largely only mentioned in passing in works on nineteenth-century Irish women.[643] This study will also question why the DWTA failed to recruit Catholics and remained largely Protestant in its composition.

The DWTA drew on a longer history of temperance in Ireland, most notably Father Theobald Mathew's teetotal campaign that spread rapidly across the country after being founded in Cork in 1838.[644] Mathew's campaign has been described as the 'single most extraordinary social movement that occurred in pre-famine Ireland.'[645] Colm Kerrigan has found that Mathew's temperance crusade had an 'enormous impact on Irish life at the time'.[646] Indeed, by 1843 according to one account 'at least half of the adult population of Ireland "had taken the pledge"'.[647] Despite this massive impact on Irish society, Mathew's crusade collapsed in post-famine Ireland.[648] Demonstrating the complicated nature of

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[642] Ibid, p. 202.
[643] Maryann Gialanella Valiulis and Mary O'Dowd, (eds.), *Women and Irish History: Essays in Honour of Margaret* MacCurtain (Dublin, 1997); Cullen and Luddy, (eds.), *Women, Power and Consciousness*.
[644] Colm Kerrigan, 'The Social Impact of the Irish Temperance Movement, 1839-1845', *Irish Economic and Social History,* 14:1 (1987), p. 20.
[645] Paul A. Townsend, *Father Mathew, Temperance and Irish Identity*, p. 1.
[646] Kerrigan, *Father Mathew and the Irish Temperance Movement*, p. 1.
[647] Townsend, *Father Mathew, Temperance and Irish Identity,* p. 5.
[648] Kerrigan, *Father Mathew and the Irish Temperance Movement,* p. 175.

religious differences for Irish temperance, Mathew received criticism from some Catholics and faced objections to the increasingly 'Protestant character' of the movement.[649] Malcolm has found that the 'subtle' long-lasting impacts of Mathew's crusade established a 'connection between teetotalism and Catholicism', but by the 1860s and 1870s Protestant-dominated temperance societies 'flourished' and this association, with denominational identities, became an obstacle for Catholic participation.[650] The majority of women involved in Irish temperance were Protestant, while Catholic women did not organise their own temperance societies. So, while the temperance movement offered opportunities to enter the public sphere for Protestant women in the later nineteenth century, by then the movement drew on a narrower social and denominational base than in the heyday of Mathew's crusade, as this chapter will demonstrate.

The DWTA was part of a longer tradition of 'women's mission' activism also seen with pressure groups such as the Anti-Corn Law League, Anti-Slavery Societies and Chartism. Women had often used the traditional emphasis on their moral and domestic responsibilities to justify their intervention in public campaigns for moral, social, religious and later political reform. The 'woman's mission' evoked the belief that 'physically and mentally men and women were suited to different tasks in life' and women had 'special qualities' of a domestic and moral nature which meant the home was their 'principle sphere.'[651] In turn, their positive moral influence could allow them to participate in the work of public societies. Even during Father Mathew's crusade, elements of 'women's mission' could be found through the presence of women at meetings which was remarked with 'satisfaction' due to the 'power of female "moral influence".'[652] The role of early Victorian pressure groups led to an assumption 'of a public role

[649] Elizabeth Malcolm, 'The Catholic Church and The Irish Temperance Movement, 1838-1901', *Irish Historical Studies*, 23:89 (1982), p. 3.
[650] Malcolm, *"Ireland Sober, Ireland Free"*, p. 330; Malcolm, 'The Catholic Church', p. 6.
[651] Tyrrell, '" Woman's Mission"', p. 205.
[652] As cited in Townsend, *Temperance and Irish Identity*, p. 123.

by women' which 'nonetheless nourished the belief that in a special way women were qualified to invoke a version of this "moral language" of reform.[653] This assumption of a woman's moral strengths was also utilised by women's temperance and suffrage organisations as both shared the belief that it was the responsibility of middle-class women to inspire good morals within society.

This chapter will also demonstrate the connections that existed between suffrage and temperance associations through shared personnel, indicating the fact that the ideals of these organisations sometimes overlapped as some women graduated from social reform to challenging the boundaries of citizenship more fundamentally. In addition to this, it will become evident that the relationship between the Irish associations and their British counterparts were not as close or connected as what has been seen with the British and Irish suffrage organisations. In fact, in the 1890s these relationships became quite strained and examining this will provide a comparison perspective on the women's temperance movements of Ireland and Britain. This will demonstrate whether the DWTA was strictly Irish in character or whether it followed a similar pattern to their British counterparts.

Throughout this chapter it will also become clear that this was a Protestant-led organisation with a distinct absence of Catholic participation. It is hard to find explicit evidence of why Catholic women stayed away, but an examination of how the DWTA often deployed the use of religious imagery will offer some perspective as to why Catholic women would be apprehensive about joining. This will in turn reveal the issues that existed between gender, class and religion as the Irish women temperance activists were predominantly middle-class Protestant women. This will also demonstrate their approach towards Catholic communities. The campaign methods of the DWTA will show distinct

[653] Ibid.

similarities with the DWSA, however, rather than petitioning regularly, the DWTA only petitioned on particular legislation. This demonstrates that the DWTA's approach to petitioning was more tactical than the DWSA, which petitioned on a yearly basis. The reason for this difference will be addressed as this will offer a vital reflection on the use of petitioning and how this varied between different Irish women's pressure groups.

The first section of this chapter examines the personnel of the DWTA and their connections to the movement for women's suffrage. This will show the DWTA's interconnections with other organisations and members' personal and family networks. While the organisation was centred on moral and social reform, it was also connected to a web of wider women's activism and networks. The second section addresses the campaign methodology of the DWTA. This section will show how the DWTA mainly utilised a combination of meetings and support from religious and charitable societies in order to preach temperance ideology. As well as meetings, the DWTA found other ways to spread their message through surveillance of public houses, promoting temperance activists onto local government roles, and criticising the inaction of Irish politicians. The third section examines how women utilised their moral authority to promote temperance and encourage domestic morality in the home. Rather than being hindered by traditional ideals of women's innate goodness, they were able to use it to their advantage by taking a leading role in the temperance movement. This section also demonstrates how temperance activists attempted to curb alcohol consumption by describing it as a sin and social evil, as well as attempting to enact subtle social changes by addressing the issue of casual intemperance. The fourth section focuses on the DWTA's limited use of petitioning. There were few direct appeals to Parliament regarding temperance; though the committee did petition unrelated issues such as the Home Rule Bill. However, there were some exceptions to this as the committee petitioned in other ways and used other

subscriptional appeals such as memorials. The fifth section explores Irish temperance activist's relations with other temperance bodies in the UK and USA, with a particular focus on Isabella Tod's relationship with Lady Somerset, the President of the British Women's Temperance Associations. This will show how Irish temperance organisations, such as the BWTA and DWTA, decided to be independent from British temperance societies and instead formed their own union with other Irish branches. The final section address the DWTA's approach to gender, class and religion. The DWTA was dominated by middle-class Protestant women and the ideas the organisation promoted to its audience were messages shaped by issues of class, gender and respectability. It analyses a fictional story depicting the dangers of intemperance in a Catholic family, published by the *British Women's Temperance Journal* (*BWTJ*), to reflect on these ideals that were promoted by the DWTA.

DWTA personnel and connections to suffrage

The DWTA sat within the expanding web of Irish women's organisations, most of which, as established in the prior chapters' analyses of the LNA and DWSA/IWSLGA, were dominated by Protestants. For example, Hannah Wigham was a member of the LNA, the DWSA/IWSLGA and the DWTA.[654] To give another example of these connections, Anna Haslam also attended temperance meetings, and her parents, Abraham and Jane Fisher, were involved in Father Mathew's crusade. [655] Elizabeth Malcolm also noted that many of the women involved in the temperance movement were actually the wives and daughters of temperance activists.[656] This demonstrates the inter-generational links that existed between the suffrage and temperance movement of the later nineteenth century. This, and matrimonial activism, was actually common in nineteenth century

[654] *The Englishwomen's Review,* 15 Apr. 1897, p. 98.
[655] *Freeman's Journal,* 12 Dec. 1899, p. 2; Cullen, 'Anna Maria Haslam', p. 164.
[656] Malcolm, *"Ireland Sober, Ireland Free"*, p. 176.

middle-class women's activism. For instance, Hannah Wigham's husband, Henry, often chaired DWTA meetings, while her sister-in-law, Eliza Wigham, was an early adopter of the teetotal pledge, and was later vice-president of the British Women's Temperance Association Scottish Christian Union.[657] Middle-class Irish women's activism was not only underpinned by links between organisations, but also personal and familial networks.

Drawing out similarities to other women's pressure movements of the nineteenth-century, the DWTA relied on the support of male politicians such as T.W. Russell, who, as examined in chapter 2, would become a Liberal Unionist MP for South Tyrone in 1886.[658] Russell was also a member of the DWSA and acts as a direct link to the DWTA as he often presided over DWTA meetings in order to share his findings from Parliament, which greatly benefitted women members who could not attend themselves. Russell had long been involved in temperance and he was behind the formation of the Ladies Metropolitan Temperance Union as early as 1866 and his wife Harriet Agnew was one of the honorary secretaries.[659] He was a fierce advocate for temperance and looked down on his fellow MPs for not taking a greater interest in the issue. According to Russell, 'he was prouder of his 25 years' work in the temperance movement than of his political work, and he would prefer to be judged by his temperance advocacy than by his parliamentary work.[660] At a meeting in April 1888, Russell described Dublin as 'the most drunken and disorderly city of the universe.'[661] He was, however, glad to be there as 'in the temperance movement, he, as a politician,

[657] Lesley Richmond 'Eliza Wigham', in H.C.G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (eds.), *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 2008), [https://doi-org.ezphost.dur.ac.uk/10.1093/ref:odnb/55216] [Last Accessed, 14 October, 2019].
[658] James Loughlin, 'Russell, Sir Thomas Wallace', in James McGuire and James Quinn (eds), *Dictionary of Irish Biography*, (Cambridge, 2009), [http://dib.cambridge.org/viewReadPage.do?articleId=a7848] [Last Accessed, 21 September, 2020].
[659] Malcolm, *"Ireland Sober, Ireland Free*, p. 176.
[660] *British Women's Temperance Journal*, 1 Mar. 1889, p. 35.
[661] Ibid.

had a political side which would come up in the resolutions that day. The whole country was troubled about the poverty and misery which existed everywhere around them.' [662]

While ostensibly concerned with moral and social reform, the DWTA also had important connections to suffrage in terms of personnel and ideas. These links could also be found in Belfast and Britain as Isabella Tod and Eliza Wigham were also leading suffragists in Belfast and Scotland. Eliza Sturge, of the Birmingham Women's Suffrage Society, was present at a meeting of the DWTA in 1876.[663] Both suffragists and women temperance reformers utilised conservative feminist arguments regarding the moral superiority of women, which made them key arbiters in social and moral reform. Tod used women's temperance work as an argument for suffrage as she urged that 'the granting of the Franchise would extend women's powers for good' as the 'power to reduce evil lay within the woman's practice of her innate goodness'.[664] Such tactics were also used in the UK and Megan Smitley has argued that temperance societies such as the Scottish Christian Union and the World Women's Christian Temperance Union (WWCTU) challenged 'prevailing feminine roles by claiming the propriety extending women's moral influence out of the home and into the public political arena.'[665] However, rather than challenging, women were actually extending contemporary gender norms to apply outside the home.

Irish and British women alike were taking on a leading role by taking their experiences of running their household and applying it to public social issues, such as intemperance. According to Elspeth King, suffragists and women 'temperance workers were ultimately fighting the same battle, for the realisation

[662] *British Women's Temperance Journal,* 1 Apr. 1888, p. 39.
[663] *Dublin Daily Express,* 21 Jan. 1876, p. 2.
[664] As cited in Luddy, 'Isabella M S Tod', p. 212.
[665] Megan Smitley, ''Inebriates', 'Heathens', Templars and Suffragists: Scotland and imperial feminism c. 1870-1914', *Women's History Review,* 11:3 (2002), p. 456.

of the political power of women that would change society.'[666] It is true that they shared the universal aim of promoting women to positions of influence, which would in turn grant them more power to display their ability to take on public responsibilities. Brian Harrison suggested that 'the very act of joining a teetotal society involved a modest form of feminism' and that 'to expenditure which could benefit the whole family.'[667] Clearly, suffrage and temperance issues were connected through conservative feminist ideals regarding women's claim to having superior expertise on moral and social issues, which would allow them to influence positive changes in politics. This was particularly the case in Ireland as both the DWTA and BWTA had committee members, such as the Hannah Wigham and Isabella Tod, who were involved in both suffrage and temperance societies. This demonstrates the links between temperance and the increasing involvement of Irish Protestant middle-class women in the world of politics.

Campaign methods

The DWTA's campaign, like many women's organisations of this period, focused primarily on meetings, education and tactical bouts of petitioning. The DWTA often promoted temperance through these meetings, rather than campaigning for changes in temperance legislation through petitioning. Their aim was to promote teetotalism and conversion through meetings and 'disseminating temperance literature.'[668] The *Freeman's Journal,* which had Nationalist political leanings and 'occupied a central position in Irish public life', often published the reports from DWTA meetings.[669] Analysing their organisational methods reveals a great deal on the inner mechanics of the DWTA, which offers a reflection on the DWTA's approach to issues of gender and class societal divides. The meetings organised

[666] As cited in Ibid, p. 456.
[667] Brian Harrison, *Drink and the Victorians: The Temperance Question in England, 1815-1872* (London, 1971), p. 175.
[668] *Freeman's Journal,* 23 Jan. 1879, p. 3.
[669] Felix M. Larkin, '" A Great Daily Organ": The Freeman's Journal, 1763-1924', *History Ireland*, 14:3, p. 46.

by the DWTA were credited by T.W. Russell for the growing success of the temperance in Ireland as 'some years ago such a thing as a temperance meeting was not heard of, while now they were springing up everywhere, and the city was becoming honeycombed so to speak with temperance societies.' [670] Educating members of the public was a key strategy and the committee was sure 'they all felt the importance of the work and the urgent necessity of promoting it in every way in their power.'[671]

The DWTA's campaign methodology was reliant on reaching the poor and working-class communities through meetings and patronage by authorities, such as charities and religious institutions. Reflecting these characteristics of the DWTA's campaign, a series of meetings was arranged by the DWTA and Mrs Spencer of Bristol in November 1887, which included drawing room meetings reserved for upper and middle-class women, while other meetings were arranged for 'working people' and one for members of the Young Women's Christian Association.'[672] In addition to this, temperance meetings were arranged for members of Protestant inmates of 'one of the great city workhouses; also to the women at the Prison Gate mission.'[673] Notably, campaign tactics such as this actually came under criticism from Joseph Livesey, the founder of teetotalism. He believed the temperance movement of the 1870s had become religious and remote from the working class as it increasingly relied on patronage from religious and charitable organisations and disseminated print literature rather than face to face conversion, which was the hallmark of the early temperance campaign.[674]

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[670] *Freeman's Journal,* 3 Feb. 1877, p. 7.
[671] *Freeman's Journal,* 23 Jan. 1879, p. 3
[672] *British Women's Temperance Journal,* 1 Jan. 1887, p. 143; *British Women's Temperance Journal,* 1 Dec. 1887, p. 134.
[673] *British Women's Temperance Journal,* 1 Dec. 1887, p. 134.
[674] Harrison, *Drink and the Victorians,* pp. 190-191.

There certainly was a level of disconnect between temperance activists and members of the public. In regards to Spencer's tour in Ireland, Charlotte Edmundson claimed that 'on each occasion the attendance was large, and everywhere Mrs. Spencer was warmly received, and listened to with the utmost interest and attention.'[675] The article suggested that 'her addresses have been the means of doing much good and of advancing the cause of which she is so eloquent an advocate.'[676] Yet, despite references to Spencer 'doing much good' the article did not report any practical evidence as to what Spencer did that was influential on these women other than her speech. Despite criticisms from Livesey, this strategy of remotely preaching to the working-classes continued into 1891, as another series of lectures were held in Dublin by Mrs Ecroyd, a representative for the Liverpool WTA, where she gave a total of 16 addresses to various working-class groups and religious organisations such as the Y.W.C.A. and the Wesleyan Chapel. [677]

As well as public meetings, drawing room-meetings were often held specifically to recruit and preach to middle and upper-class women. Activists were convinced by past experience that drawing-room meetings were the only way 'the upper and middle-classes can be reached, many ladies being attracted to meetings in a private house who would not go to one of a more public character.'[678] At these meetings, middle-class women were encouraged to convince their husbands to sign the pledge.[679] The organisation aimed primarily to seek the help of middle-class women, who typically took charge of the home, and Sarah Richardson has found that the home and family were often key sites of women's political activism. The home itself could be 'an intensely political space',

[675] Ibid.
[676] Ibid.
[677] *British Women's Temperance Journal*, 1 Apr. 1891, p. 46.
[678] *Freeman's Journal*, 23 Jan. 1879, p. 3
[679] *British Women's Temperance Journal*, 1 Dec. 1887, p. 134.

with wives having the ability to influence their husband's ways of thinking.[680] This gives reason as to why the committee aimed to attract middle-class women to their meetings, as well as boosting the respectable character of the organisation.

The DWTA also attempted to inject temperance ideals into local politics by helping to elect temperance candidates onto local government roles. In 1899, during the first elections under the 1898 Local Government Act, the DWTA undertook 'a considerable amount of canvassing, with the gratifying result that almost all the Temperance candidates for whom they were working were elected.'[681] This demonstrated how the DWTA co-operated and worked with local politicians, which in turn further involved these women in political campaigns. This demonstrates how the participation of women in the DWTA had personal benefits, as their experience there educated them in approaching political matters and the use of political methods to achieve their aims. It also allowed them to develop their own organisational capabilities.

While the DWTA committee focused primarily on converting members of the public by promoting teetotalism, they were also often critical of the priorities of Irish politicians. The committee believed that MPs 'spent a great deal of their time in speaking of the gravity of the land question, and did not seem to consider the gravity of the drink question.' [682] This suggests that the committee felt that the land question, which saw many poor families made homeless due to effect of extortionate rents, was a situation on the same level of severity as that of intemperance. Russell described towns 'in the south of Ireland' as disgraceful as they were 'packed' with public houses, and many of the politicians were people who 'were interested in keeping the state of affairs in existence.'[683] This rhetoric

[680] Richardson, *The Political Worlds of Women*, p. 15.
[681] *British Women's Temperance Journal*, 1 Mar. 1899, p. 38.
[682] *British Women's Temperance Journal*, 1 Mar. 1889, p. 35.
[683] Ibid.

deployed by the DWTA evidently blended philanthropy with political judgements against the South. This issue transgressed the sphere of philanthropy into the world of political debate.

The DWTA also deployed surveillance and shaming tactics in order to criticise individuals who made use of public houses. This campaign method aimed to link intemperance as the cause of poverty; thus, poverty was rooted in individual moral failings, rather than environmental factors. The DWTA undertook surveillance of public houses to provide evidence to their claims of the prevalence of alcoholism in Dublin and used these results to tie issues of intemperance with poverty. In a report from 1889, the DWTA deployed statistics claiming there was 943 public houses in the county of Dublin alone, of which 788 held seven-day licenses.[684] The DWTA collected this data by appointing their members to observe various public houses, and thirty of these were watched on Saturday afternoon, with the result that between six and eleven o'clock 14,582 persons entered, and on a Sunday afternoon between two and seven o'clock 13,426 persons entered.[685] The report emphasised the severity of this situation as it asked 'could we wonder at the poverty and misery of Dublin?'[686] In addition to reports on surveillance, the committee also published statistics on public houses across the country, in order to emphasise the widespread influence of intemperance.[687] The DWTA deployed such tactics in order to shame these individuals, as they diagnosed poverty as the inevitable outcome – not a contributory cause – of intemperance.

[684] Ibid.
[685] *British Women's Temperance Journal*, 1 Mar. 1889, p. 35.
[686] Ibid.
[687] *British Women's Temperance Journal*, 1 Apr. 1888, p. 39.

Social and moral control

Women largely took on the responsibility of promoting temperance and encouraging domestic morality in the home. During a meeting held in Dublin in 1875, under the auspices of the Women's Temperance Association, T.W. Russell, explained that the object of a Women's Temperance Association was to 'enlist women in the cause of temperance, so that by word and example they may influence the other sex, and banish intoxicating drinks from the household.'[688] This was not an uncommon attitude among both men and women involved in the temperance movement, as Megan Smitley has found similar instances in the case of the Scottish Christian Union. For these female templars, temperance reform ideology was also 'underpinned by the desire to homogenise "the female inebriate's" behaviour' as middle-class women were interested in '" rescuing" the poorer woman drinker and to "reclaim" her for marriage or domestic service.'[689] The concern was not specifically with alcoholism, but rather with ensuring that a 'female inebriate' could be reformed in order to undertake her role as mother and homemaker.

Maria Luddy has found that women's temperance activism was 'the expression of women's superior moral and spiritual nature; through her example and influence on the family the standards of a civilised life would be maintained.'[690] Such heavily gendered attitudes towards women reformers of this period were expressed by George Foley, an attendee at a DWTA meeting, who believed that women 'above all others' had it 'more in their power to make a change in the present condition of society and ameliorate their own condition.'[691] Women were widely credited with an authority over social and moral control

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[688] *Nation,* 20 Jan. 1875, p. 3.
[689] Smitley, Megan K., '"Woman's Mission: The Temperance and Women's Suffrage Movements in Scotland, c. 1870-1914" (University of Glasgow PhD thesis, 2002), p. 8.
[690] Luddy, *Women and Philanthropy,* p. 204.
[691] Ibid.

and men like Foley believed that through the women's work they would be able to place the movement 'in a better position than it ever before occupied.' [692] The DWTA used this discourse to expand into the public sphere. This had also been the case with British organisations of the 1850s, such as the United Kingdom Alliance, which often appealed to women for help as it was 'a woman's duty "and…prerogative to be a Reformer of all that pertains to social morals and manner."'[693] These attitudes towards women's roles in temperance continued into the 1870s, but given women's increased responsibilities through women's temperance associations their roles had become more valued.

The DWTA believed there were various forms of opposition they had to tackle in order to see temperance succeed and through this the heavy religious influence on the Association becomes more obvious. The DWTA's concern lay with a range of issues, such as what T.W. Russell described as 'the organised power of the liquor traffic and the far more serious opposition which they sometimes meet- the opposition of a Christian people.'[694] The campaign was tied up in religious imagery, as the DWTA saw temperance as God's work. Often the members were encouraged to continue working by having 'every reason to thank God and take courage, feeling that their work has not been in vain- that the cause is certainly advancing, especially among thoughtful and Christian people.'[695] These religious rhetorical appeals were intended to inspire women to believe it was their duty to encourage temperance and to ensure they did not become disillusioned in their campaign work. In regards to the failure of getting the Sunday and Saturday closing Bills carried through Parliament in 1890, Charlotte Edmundson was glad to know 'that those who worked so hard to obtain this great boon, so far from being disheartened and are determined to persevere until

[692] Ibid.
[693] As cited in Brian Harrison, 'The British Prohibitionists 1853-1873: A Biographical Analysis' in *International Review of Social History* 15:3 (1970), p. 403.
[694] *Freeman's Journal*, 3 Feb. 1877, p. 7.
[695] *British Women's Temperance Journal*, 1 Mar. 1890, p. 36.

in God's own time their efforts shall be crowned with success.'[696] Rather than only being assured that they were working towards this common goal for their own welfare, members were also taught that it was to be done in God's name. Evoking religious ideals was a strategy used consistently within the DWTA, reflecting the religious beliefs of those involved.

The DWTA's activities were focused on sin as social temporal evil, rather than spiritual sin. Dominic Erdozian has found that 'once sin was 'socialised and ethicised as "vice", so too was salvation.'[697] The transformation of sin as an inner spiritual problem to a public moral concern would have an influence also on social reform. Similar sentiments were expressed by Charlotte Edmundson in 1879, who believed 'that the false idea of hospitality regarding intoxicating drinks lay at the root of much of the evil springing from the drinking customs of society.'[698] Evidently, intemperance was categorised as a great social sin that had to be curbed, which in turn, would lead to further social control. Such views were also encouraged at DWTA meetings which would often feature members of the clergy and at a meeting in January 1895 Reverend Moffatt claimed that 'drink was a sin and those who made drink were bringing comfort to the enemies of Christ.'[699] This belief had a strong influence on the running of the DWTA, which was motivated by ideals around temporal sin as well as concern for the family household. This secularisation of sin was a result of and encouragement to women's leadership, since it made domestic order both a religious priority and a public political issue, to a new degree.

The DWTA were also concerned with casual intemperance and these concerns highlights their attempts to enact subtle social changes to convince the

[696] Ibid.
[697] Dominic Erdozain, 'The Secularisation of Sin in the Nineteenth Century', *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 62:1 (2011), p. 66.
[698] *Freeman's Journal*, 23 Jan. 1879, p. 3.
[699] *Freeman's Journal*, 31 Jan. 1895, p. 3.

public to adopt a temperate lifestyle. The association had, from its earliest formation, made this a special aim in its work and the subject had been prominently brought forward at all the meetings held during the year in 1879.[700] Members, publicly and privately, had endeavoured to carry out the object of the society, which was 'inducing heads of households to remove from their tables these useless and dangerous drinks.'[701] The committee tried to influence subtle change in casual intemperance in 1889, when they tried to convince stewardesses on passenger boats to refrain from using brandy to relieve sea-sickness and 'to prevail on railway companies to prevent the sale of drink at railway stations.'[702] Regular meetings were held in pursuit of these aims.[703] Trying to implement such changes did face road-blocks, as indicated in 1883, when a report was published in the *Freeman's Journal* highlighting the 'extra expense' of teetotal travellers who had to pay extra for non-intoxicating drinks and claimed that this difficulty was an 'insuperable one.'[704] Hanna Wigham tried to bypass this by suggesting that alcohol could be replaced with soup or tea but the author of the article was not convinced by her suggestion as they would be so hot that no traveller would want them.[705] The organisation's attempts to implement subtle changes to everyday intemperance would not be easy, but this acts as an example of the DWTA's aim to spread their ideals by attaching stigma to the act of everyday social drinking. The DWTA was not just about curbing alcoholism; the fact that they objected to casual consumption indicates that this organisation was focused on implementing moral control in all areas of Irish society.

[700] *Freeman's Journal,* 23 Jan. 1879, p. 3.
[701] *British Women's Temperance Journal,* 1 Mar. 1889, p. 15.
[702] Ibid.
[703] Ibid.
[704] *Freeman's Journal,* 21 Dec. 1883, p. 5.
[705] Ibid.

Petitioning

The DWTA did not often arrange its own petitions, preferring to petition at key moments, alongside organising meetings and sending resolutions to political representatives. The DWTA provide another example of differing approaches of women-led pressure groups towards the use of petitioning. Based on data from the SCPP reports, there are few women's petitions from Ireland on temperance. There is no evidence in the SCPP reports that the DWTA petitioned on issues such as the 1908 licensing bill, which would create difficulties and limitations on obtaining alcohol licences. For the DWTA, the strategic use of petitioning was supplementary rather than a fundamental part of their activism. As discussed earlier, women temperance activists saw value in the moral conversion of their campaign, which focused more on conducting active and direct work through engagement within communities and spreading their ideals among members of the public. It was not that the DWTA were rejecting petitioning as a campaign method, but rather, it served its purpose when the Association saw the value in petitioning on a particular piece of legislation, as this section will demonstrate.

An example of a strategic petitioning campaign conducted by the DWTA was in May 1892, when the DWTA submitted a petition signed by Hanna Wigham on behalf of a DWTA meeting, in favour of the Bill for the Prevention of Sale of Intoxicating Liquor to Children.[706] After the submission of the petition the DWTA continued to campaign on this and later in 1899, DWTA member Rebecca Crawford, appeared before the Royal Commission to present evidence of children entering public houses. [707] In addition to submitting their aforementioned petition to Parliament, the committee also adopted a similar method of subscription appeal by sending a memorial to the District

[706] SCPP *Reports*, (1892), p. 297.
[707] *British Women's Temperance Journal*, 1 Mar. 1899, p. 38.

Magistrates.[708] However, their request for a deputation on the matter was declined. In response to this, and in an attempt to draw up publicity after being denied an audience, the DWTA sent their memorial, their observations and the Magistrates' reply for publication in the daily papers.[709] Evidently, when the DWTA felt compelled to petition on particular legislation, the Association went beyond petitioning Parliament by also deploying other campaign strategies, such as appearing before the Royal Commission and directly appealing to local authorities.

The Protestantism of the Irish women's temperance movement was revealed in their intervention on other issues unrelated to temperance. For example, in 1893, members of the DWTA from Blackrock, Kingstown and Monkstown, with Elizabeth Charlotte Foot as president and Emily Jane Foot as secretary, petitioned against Gladstone's second Home Rule Bill. Thomas Russell supported and presented the petition in Parliament.[710] The DWTA identifying itself in this petition, demonstrates how the Association was merging temperance issues with Unionist aims by opposing Home Rule. This also further emphasises the DWTA's identity as a Protestant and Unionist organisation and offers reason as to why their outreach to Catholic women would not have gone smoothly. In comparison, in the UK, the *BWTJ* published an article in 1893 stating that 'whatever happens to the Home Rule Bill for Ireland, it is perfectly clear that the English people mean to have Home Rule over the Liquor Traffic, with power to banish from any locality that public nuisance.'[711] Rather than directly addressing the political controversies of Home Rule, UK temperance activists compared 'Home Rule' to their own determination to have control over intemperance within the locality. The DWTA, however, directly opposed Home Rule through

[708] Ibid.
[709] Ibid.
[710] SCPP, *Reports* (1893), p. 47.
[711] *British Women's Temperance Journal*, 1 July. 1893, p. 222.

this petition and by doing so the Association was increasingly associating itself with Unionist views.

Mass petitioning was another form of petitioning utilised by Irish women temperance activists. Two large petitions were presented to Parliament from 'the Women of Ireland' in support of the Sale of Intoxicating Liquors on Sunday (Ireland) Bill, which would prohibit the sale of alcohol on a Sunday. The first petition was presented in 1875, when women submitted 27,320 signatures, and the second in 1876, when they submitted 25,369 signatures.[712] Though it is not stated, it is highly likely that the DWTA were involved in the organisation of obtaining these signatures. This method of collective petitioning shared similarities to the Chartist technique of collecting large petitions with many signatures, rather than multiple petitions with fewer signatures. This offers reason as to why the DWTA did not arrange or organise petitions solely from the Association, but rather, preferred to organise petitions on a much larger scale, allowing them to show their strength in numbers. Therefore, while the DWTA did not petition on a yearly basis, like organisations such as the DWSA, this did not mean the Association was rejecting petitioning as a campaign method, they instead organised petitions strategically.

The relationship between the Irish and British temperance movements

Compared to the generally positive relationship between Irish and British suffrage associations, the relationship between the sister women's temperance organisations was more complicated. The British Women's Temperance Association was actually formed after the Irish associations in 1876.[713] All temperance associations, including the DWTA and BWTA, were encouraged by

[712] SCPP, *Reports* (1875) p. 479; SCPP, *Reports* (1876), p. 571.
[713] *Northern Whig,* 6 Aug. 1894, p. 6. To avoid confusion between the Belfast and British Women's Temperance associations, the Belfast association will be referred to as the BWTA and the British association will be referred to as the British Association.

the editors to report to the *BWTJ*.[714] Although the DWTA and BWTA were among the first societies to be affiliated to the British association, the fact that the former only occasionally sent reports of their meetings to the *BWTJ* suggests that they were semi-detached.[715]

Even so, members from the British branches, known as 'organising agents', often toured Ireland and held meetings with various groups within Irish society.[716] The British and Irish temperance associations evidently co-operated and used these meetings to spread their gospel on the value of temperance, as well as inspiring middle-class women to join their ranks. Despite the seemingly detached relationship between the official organisations then, there were close personal relationships between Irish and British women involved in the temperance movement. For example, in 1891 alone, organising agent Miss Hoddingnott arranged ten meetings across Ireland.[717] Laura Ormiston Chant, who had previously worked with the DWSA, met with the DWTA in 1887 for a series of meetings with the Young Women's Christian Association, the Protestant inmates of the South Dublin Union, and the women at the Prison Gate mission.[718] Demonstrating her links to suffrage, Chant also addressed meetings on the protection of girls and on women's suffrage.[719] When the *BWTJ* reported on such meetings, it naturally asserted their success and impact, claiming that Chant 'was listened to with the deepest interest and attention, and her fervent and touching appeals have, we doubt not, reached many hearts.'[720]

As stated earlier, the relationship between the Irish and British associations were indeed complicated due to the UK-wide splintering resulting

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[714] *The British Women's Temperance Journal,* 1 Oct. 1887, p. 118.
[715] Lewis Lilian Shiman, *Women and Leadership in Nineteenth-Century England* (New York, 1992), p. 168.
[716] *British Women's Temperance Journal,* 1 December, 1891. P. 143.
[717] Ibid.
[718] *British Women's Temperance Journal,* 1 Jan. 1887, p. 5.
[719] Ibid.
[720] Ibid.

from discord within the British Women's Temperance Association itself, due to their suspicion of the increased 'Americanisation' of the British Association.[721] The British Association's executive committee was sceptical of the close relationship between the president, Lady Isabella Somerset and the American Women's Christian Union President, Frances Willard. The committee was also 'antagonised by Somerset's enthusiasm for Willard's "do everything" policy, which advocated temperance women's engagement with all "women's issues" including women's suffrage.'[722] Many activists had a distinct desire to keep temperance separate from women's suffrage and the wider campaign for women's rights, though some organisations, such as BWTA, in addition to temperance legislation, also petitioned in support of suffrage legislation, such as the Parliamentary Franchise (Extension of Women) Bill.[723] Evidently, the BWTA believed it was appropriate for the Association to weigh in on suffrage issues and linked them to temperance, but these sentiments were not shared by all in the British Association.

This resulted in tension within the ranks as the British Association debated Somerset's desire to 'implement so-called "Americanisation"' and this led to a split of the British Association and the formation of the breakaway British Temperance League in 1893, which shunned the political dimension of temperance and focused on traditional areas of women's public work.[724] This led to the BWTA and DWTA withdrawing their membership from the union.[725] The British Association became known as the National British Women's Association and developed 'an extensive program of activities based on the pro-American

[721] As cited in Smitley, 'Scotland and Imperial Feminism', p. 460.
[722] Ibid.
[723] SCPP, *Reports* (1882), p. 129; SCPP, *Reports* (1877), p. 358; SCPP, *Reports* (1888), p. 176; SCPP, *Reports* (1892), p. 170.
[724] Smitley, 'The Temperance and Women's Suffrage Movements in Scotland', pp. 118-119.
[725] Shiman, *Women and Leadership*, p. 168.

"Do Everything" policy.[726] The fact the DWTA and BWTA did not support either organisation again suggests a certain detachment and autonomy on the part of the Irish bodies from the British groups.

There were times when the personal relations between Irish and British temperance activists were strained. The best example is the relationship between Isabella Tod and Lady Somerset. In January 1896, Tod claimed that the BWTA had originally joined the British Association due to the esteemed regard they had for Margaret Bright Lucas, their first president.[727] Tod also recalled how the BWTA had lobbied for the British Association to remain united when Margaret Byers, the Honorary Secretary of the BWTA, wrote to them 'entreating for peace.'[728] However, Tod complained that these appeals were treated with 'indifference' by Somerset's party and for this reason it 'helped to show us how unwise it would be to be allied with them.'[729] The language used by Tod is revealing of how one of the most influential and important Irish women's activists felt shunned and disregarded by the British Association.

Previous chapters have addressed the issue of subservience versus equality between Irish and British women's movements. They have questioned how independent Irish branches were of their British counterparts or how much they relied on their guidance. In the case of women in temperance, Tod's feud with Somerset shows that the BWTA wished to remain independent of the British Association, particularly due to their clashing views. Somerset was displeased with a pamphlet published by Tod entitled 'Women's Temperance Work' in which Tod criticised the British Association.[730] Somerset disputed Tod's reference to '"the rule of Lady Henry Somerset and her little court"' as 'an entire

[726] Ibid.
[727] *Northern Whig*, 17 Jan. 1896, p. 7.
[728] Ibid.
[729] Ibid.
[730] *Northern Whig*, 2 Apr. 1896, p. 7.

misrepresentation of the actual facts of the case.' She claimed that there had been no attempt made to ask the Irish women's societies to join the British Association and all that had been done 'is to endeavour to bring Ireland into line with the other nations in joining the international society of the World's Women's Christian Temperance Union.'[731] She also denied that the British Association and the WWCTU were concerned with political partnerships.[732] Isabella Tod's response to this highlights the BWTA's desire to remain independent and to stay true to their own beliefs, as she felt that the British Association and the WWCTU were 'these two intrusive societies' and that they 'seem animated by much the same spirit' and that the British Association in particular 'has associated itself with people and with movements whom most of us here distrust and disapprove of.'[733] Tod ended her response, encapsulating the desire of the BWTA to represent themselves by noting that 'no worker should commit himself or herself to those who want to speak in their name, but over whose speaking they would have no control.'[734] It is clear that Tod wanted to maintain the autonomy of the BWTA and viewed the WWCTU as a threat to that.

Tod actually received some criticism for her views from a commentator, Albert L. Altman, who disagreed with her views on the WWCTU. He believed that the union of all societies would lead to great accomplishments and 'if union is strength, and in Belfast, where this idea is strongly enforced politically, then it follows that Miss Tod is illogical in saying temperance work is for individual effort alone.'[735] Altman was comparing the Union of temperance societies to UK Unionism and thus challenged Tod on the inconsistency of her opinions as he suggested that those who supported unity of the UK, should also support the

[731] Ibid.
[732] Ibid.
[733] *Northern Whig*, 8 Apr. 1896, p. 8.
[734] Ibid.
[735] *Northern Whig*, 6 Apr. 1896, p. 6.

Union of temperance associations. For some, the idea of a Union meant strength in numbers but for others, such as Tod, it meant control and loss of agency.

Two key points emerge from this analysis of Tod: that she liked a degree of independence and autonomy and that she was against the mixing up of temperance with other issues and Americanisation. However, as noted earlier, the BWTA demonstrated some flexibility on this stance when the Association petitioned in support of suffrage legislation. Overall, Tod reflected an older generation's view of single-issue politics as focused on one target at a time and being 'non-party'. This is clearly a generational characteristic of women's organisations of this period as similar splits occurred in the 1890s regarding the question of party associations. For example, a split occurred in the Women's Liberal Federation as some members wished to pursue female suffrage and questioned their loyalty to the Liberal Party when Gladstone announced his opposition to it, resulting in a schism within the organisation.[736] Tod was strongly against the association of a temperance society with any political party since, as we have seen throughout this chapter, the BWTA cared 'a good deal less for political temperance and a good deal more for moral suasion, than most English bodies.'[737] Tod's fears evidently stemmed from the fact that Somerset increasingly became associated with suffrage and party politics as she attended a meeting of the Liverpool Women's Liberal Association.[738] A majority of the British Association's committee members shared Tod's fears that under Somerset, temperance work would become secondary to the work for women's suffrage.[739] Evidently Tod and the BWTA did not agree with the WWCTU's pro-suffrage

[736] Claire Hirshfield, 'Fractured Faith: Liberal Party Women and the Suffrage Issue in Britain, 1892-1914', *Gender and History,* 2:2 (1990), p. 177.
[737] *Northern Whig,* 8 Apr. 1896, p. 8.
[738] Margaret Barrow, 'Teetotal Feminists: Temperance Leadership and the Campaign for Women's Suffrage' in Claire Eustance, Joan Ryan and Laura Ugolini, (eds.), *Suffrage Reader: Charting Directions in British Suffrage History* (London, 2000), p. 75.
[739] Ibid.

stance on backing women's equality.[740] As acknowledged in previous chapters, Tod herself was a suffragist but her opinions on this demonstrates how women who belonged to more than one women's pressure group, could have very complicated and divisive views on political issues. While Tod supported both suffrage and temperance, she did not always support the intermingling of both movements.

Tod was the most outspoken on her refusal to join the Union but Hannah Wigham was also apprehensive about joining. During a Ladies' Temperance conference in Dublin, Lady Somerset and Frances Willard requested that the DWTA join the WWCTU. Wigham said that while there was 'immense good' resulting from Somerset and Willard's speeches, she decided to wait to see whether 'it would be advisable to give that temperance movement into the hands of the World's Women's Temperance Union' and was also glad 'that there had been no definite course of action decided upon in regards to this.[741] Wigham's response was certainly more subdued than that of Tod's, as there seemed to be a desire on Wigham's part to maintain good relations with their British counterparts. This still proves that neither the BWTA nor the DWTA wished to be associated with any movements that attempted to misrepresent their personal beliefs and values.

Irish women, rather than join a foreign mass organisation, took the onus to lead themselves and it was decided by members of various women's temperance associations to form an umbrella body known as the Irish Women's Temperance Union (IWTU) in May 1894.[742] This was done out of a desire to unite all women's temperance associations as there was no central point to which to look for help and information and to bring attention to the evils of consumption and curb

[740] Smitley, 'The Temperance and Women's Suffrage Movements in Scotland', p. 181.
[741] *Cork Constitution,* 26 May. 1894, p. 3.
[742] *British Women's Temperance Journal,* 1 Jun. 1894, p. 85.

inebriety amongst women.[743] This is notable as it demonstrates that Irish women temperance activists were neither willing to be represented by a British nor an American Association. However, these women recognised the need to have a central organisation, particularly as the temperance movement was growing. It was hoped this union would 'stimulate and encourage' the temperance associations.[744] Numerous women were selected to form an interim council to communicate with existing societies and ask them to join the Union. Cork was represented by Mrs Beale and Mrs J.H. Thompson, Dublin by Emily Foot and Charlotte Edmundson, Bessbrook by Mrs Richardson and Belfast by Margaret Byers and Isabella Tod.[745] The IWTU became a 'great army' of 28 societies with the aim of eradicating intemperance.[746] This incident has demonstrated that Irish women temperance activists were more independent from their British counterparts than has been seen with women's organisations examined in previous chapters.

Approaches to gender, class and religion.

The ideas the DWTA, and the temperance movement more generally, promoted to its audiences were heavily shaped by class, gender and respectability. Attitudes of the women's temperance movement towards the Catholic Irish working-class and consumption were illustrated in an article published in the *BWTJ.* This is revealing of the role of gender, class and respectability within the campaign as the *BWTJ* aimed to encourage members to work with lower class families through a stereotypical story about an Irish Catholic couple, whose marriage falls apart due to her husband Paddy being too 'deeply attached' to drink.[747] It is notable that a UK-based journal chose to conduct a story about the

[743] *Northern Whig,* 6 Aug. 1894, p. 6.
[744] Ibid.
[745] Ibid.
[746] *British Women's Temperance Journal,* 1 Jun. 1894, p. 85.
[747] *British Women's Temperance Journal,* 1 Jul. 1895, p. 95.

effects alcohol had on Irish families, Catholic families in particular, by depicting a dramatic scene where the wife, Mrs O'Rafferty, attempts to kill herself because her husband's alcoholism had driven her to extremes. The article intensified the story by illustrating an image of the couple's children 'hearing the noise, rushed half-naked into the room, and with piteous cries begged their mother not to kill herself.'[748] This encapsulated ideals regarding the welfare of children and the negative effect alcohol had on their upbringing. Not only did it break families apart but it also relegated children to a deprived and miserable life.[749]

The article addressed issues of respectability as it claimed that Mrs O' Rafferty 'had been very respectably brought up, and it was indeed galling to her to see those whom she despised in her younger days prospering, while she and her children were now reduced to absolute want, all through the drunken ways of her husband.'[750] This emphasised that alcohol poisoned otherwise moral and respectable families and F.M.L. Thompson has suggested that ideals around respectability were not reserved just for the middle-class and that a large fraction of the population clung 'to their respectability throughout their lives.' [751] This article by the *BWTJ* took advantage of feelings of guilt and shame by threatening the loss of a woman's respectability by being married to an alcoholic. Even among the working-class, societal expectations continued to be of that of respectability.

Revealing the spiritual elements of temperance, this story also included much religious imagery, as Paddy found redemption through religion and learned his lesson as 'the Spirit of the Lord spoke to his troubled consciences and the remembrance of a misspent life, causing grief and misery, poverty and

[748] Ibid.
[749] Ibid.
[750] Ibid.
[751] F.M.L. Thompson, *The Rise of Respectable Society: A Social History of Victorian Britain, 1830-1900* (Massachusetts, 1988), p. 353.

degradation to his wife and children, pierced his soul.'[752] This story demonstrated the temperance movement's prejudiced ideals around gender, class and religion. Elizabeth Malcolm has addressed this stereotype of the drinking Paddy and how the Irish reputation for drunkenness has been 'publicised by English observers, from seventeenth century soldiers to nineteenth century caricaturists and twentieth century popular press.'[753] She has found, however, that a 'comparison of consumption statistics would suggest that Irish spirit drinking, while high by modern standards, was not in fact unusual by nineteenth-century standards.' In fact, Americans at the time drank more heavily.[754] The case of Irish intemperance was certainly exaggerated in the story of this poor Catholic couple, whose suffering increased exponentially as a result of alcohol.

This story illustrates the attitudes of the middle-class Protestant women, such as those in the DWTA, and how their views were shared by other British women's temperance associations. This type of propaganda further explains why they did not receive support from Irish Catholic communities. The differences between Catholic and Protestant charitable and philanthropic organisations can also offer further explanation as to why Catholic women were discouraged from joining the DWTA. Involvement in charitable organisations offered middle-class women the opportunity to work in public as they raised funds for charity or were in charge of charitable institutions, such as orphanages. Temperance associations shared a lot of qualities with philanthropic causes as both were dedicated to social reform. The valuable skills women could learn from their involvement in charitable work could also be deployed to the work of political organisations, such as the DWTA. Luddy has found that the philanthropic work of Protestant women 'led them to political activism for social change' but for lay Catholic women 'their relegation to the secondary role of fundraisers blunted their

[752] *British Women's Temperance Journal*, 1 Jul. 1895, p. 95.
[753] Malcolm, *"Ireland Sober, Ireland Free"*, p. 332.
[754] Ibid.

political development'.[755] The reasoning for this lay in the fact that Catholic nuns dominated charitable work and only a 'handful' of philanthropic societies were formed by lay Catholic women after 1850 and these women 'did not create enduring, independent societies as their Protestant or Quaker counterparts did.'[756] As Catholic women were relegated as secondary organisers, they did not receive the same experience in leadership roles as Protestant or Quaker women.

Temperance activists also did not reach out to Catholic women, unless it was to preach temperance ideals or encourage conversion. Some members such as Emily Foot, the president of the association in Kingstown, had prejudiced ideas regarding religious differences. Foot regretted that 'amongst the Protestant section of domestic servants a great deal of drunkenness existed, and that girls of a different religious persuasion gave much more satisfaction to their mistresses.'[757] In this case, Foot was more so concerned with the fact that it was Protestant domestic servants partaking in consumption and in turn presenting themselves and their religion in a disrespectful manner. Concern also lay with the fact that girls 'of a different religious persuasion' were better behaved in the eyes of their mistresses. The language used here is indicative of the divide that existed between Protestant women and women of other faiths and further highlights again the prejudice of women, such as Foot, towards the working classes.

As mentioned earlier, the DWTA actually put middle-class women to the forefront of the campaign in the hope they would enact their good influence upon women because there were 'women to be found who were addicted to habits of intemperance and who could only be reached by women.'[758] In 1878 the

[755] Maria Luddy, 'Women and Philanthropy in Nineteenth-Century Ireland', *Voluntas International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organisations*, 7:4 (1996), p. 351.
[756] Ibid, p.354.
[757] *British Women's Temperance Journal*, 1 Mar. 1890, p. 36.
[758] *Freeman's Journal*, 23 Jan. 1879, p. 3.

DWTA, notably, did not work at all with the 'poorer classes' as Charlotte Edmundson explained that their aim 'was more to reach the upper and educated middle-classes whom it was more difficult to move.'[759] Evidently there was concern with converting upper-class members of society as they were deemed more stubborn in issues of temperance. This suggests the DWTA believed the lower-classes would be easier to convert. In 1890, the Dean of the Chapel Royal accredited the DWTA as 'the most useful in bringing to bear the influence of women on the women of Dublin, and a very great deal of good was done by that influence in the homes of the working men.'[760] He noted that much had been said about the housing of the poor, and it 'was often said that their improper housing was the cause of driving the working man to drink', however he believed that the true cause of wretchedness among the working classes 'arose from drink, for no one could point out the house of a teetotal workman in a wretched state.'[761] The Dean believed that intemperance was a leading cause of poor standards of living, rather than just poverty. This evidence suggests that the perceptions of consumption in the middle-classes, was more of an undesirable social norm rather than, in the case of the working-class population, a consequence of a bad quality of life that only worsened as a result of working men turning to drink. The ideas of "respectability" explored in this section help explain why the DWTA remained so focused on Protestant middle-class activism.

Conclusion

This chapter has shown, that while the DWTA did not have success in ridding Ireland of its public houses, it aided in the politicisation of Irish women through experience in a public political pressure group. The DWTA arranged several public meetings a year and worked alongside prominent members of the British

[759] *Freeman's Journal,* 24 Aug. 1878, p. 7.
[760] *British Women's Temperance Journal,* 1 Mar. 1890, p. 33.
[761] Ibid.

Women's Temperance Association. They were able to influence the establishment of over forty branches across Ireland alone.[762] Mainly they were able to combine public and private spheres to their own advantage as well as transgressing the lines of philanthropy into politics. While charities had traditionally focused on providing support, Irish women's temperance organisations blended efforts to convert the public with support for legislative changes to obstruct drinking.

This chapter has also addressed how the DWTA's approach to petitioning differed from organisations such as the LNA or DWSA. Rather than organising petitions regularly, petitioning acted as a complementary tactic to the DWTA's other campaign methods. The DWTA petitioned strategically in support of legislation they viewed as particularly relevant to the Associations aims, such as the Bill for the Prevention of Sale of Intoxicating Liquor to Children. The DWTA also likely partook in mass petitioning campaigns from the 'women of Ireland'. This suggests that the DWTA preferred to show strength in numbers by signing one collective petition, rather than submitting petitions on behalf of the Association, which would have fewer signatures and less impact in Parliament.

This chapter has, for the first time, analysed the DWTA and BWTA from a multitude of different perspectives, which has also provided a re-examination of the Irish temperance movement in the latter half of the nineteenth century. It has demonstrated that while at the beginning the DWTA and BWTA were associated with the British Women's Temperance Association, in later years they were greatly divided. Examining this division not only offered further information on the relationships between British and Irish women activists, it also revealed the personal political beliefs of its members, such as Isabella Tod. Tod was the most outspoken and was willing to stand up to the British Association and refuse to see the BWTA under the control of a much larger organisation whose ideals no

[762] Maria Luddy, *Women and Philanthropy,* p. 205.

longer reflected their own. While the DWTA's position was more subdued, they also disagreed with joining the WWCTU and were willing instead to form an Irish union of women's temperance associations.

This division between the Irish and British temperance associations perfectly encapsulates the resistance of Irish activists to be instructed on how to run their organisation by their British counterparts; which offers a new insight into how British and Irish activists interacted in the case of temperance. In previous chapters looking at the CD Acts repeal campaign and the suffrage movement it became clear that relationships did exist and that they were generally positive. In regards to temperance however, this was clearly a more divisive issue as the DWTA and BWTA decided to disassociate itself completely from the British Association. This offers a valuable insight into the values of the DWTA and BWTA, who did not agree with amalgamating suffrage and temperance issues, wishing to pursue both separately.

By examining the DWTA, this chapter has demonstrated that women were becoming more accepted into public pressure groups due to the growing acceptance that their moral and caring nature might make them a positive influence on enacting social change. In this sense, women temperance activists claimed a political role by embracing, rather than rejecting, gendered stereotypes. This has, in turn, shown how the DWTA was an organisation driven by ideals of respectability, temporal sin and self-denial. In addition to this, this chapter has demonstrated how religious, gender and class dynamics developed in this period. In the case of temperance, it becomes clear how all three themes were closely intertwined. Therefore, this chapter has also dispelled the theory of separate spheres as the DWTA has shown that the experience women gained at home could be used to their advantage in public pressure groups. Despite the fact that this was not an organisation dedicated to obtaining women's rights, it was able to demonstrate that women could partake in politics.

Chapter five: The Ulster Women's Declaration and the Role of Women in the Campaign against Home Rule

This chapter re-examines one of the most historically significant Unionist mobilisations to show how the Women's Declaration diverged from petitioning practices found in earlier campaigns and how this contributed to the mass mobilisation of Unionist women. On Ulster day, 28 September 1912, Unionist leaders orchestrated the mass signing of the Ulster Covenant and the accompanying Women's Declaration against Irish Home Rule. This chapter will critically re-evaluate the role of the Ulster Women's Unionist Council and the Women's Declaration itself. In particular, it will question the apparent contradiction between the role of Unionist women as auxiliary supporters to a male-led campaign, and their role as active participants and political agents. Far from confirming older notions of separate spheres, the example of the Women's Declaration shows the intermingling of the public and private to such an extent as to become almost indistinguishable. These women activists were supposedly an ancillary organisation and yet they were heavily involved in the Unionist campaign trail and demonstrated their extraordinary talents in mass mobilisation, organisation and networking. As a result, this chapter reveals the significance of the Women's Declaration within both the context of the Home Rule crisis and Unionist women's position in society.

A close study of the Women's Declaration, moreover, provides a fresh perspective on the redefinition of women's political petitioning, both for the women signing and for wider studies of petitioning culture. This is only one of the case studies in this thesis where the original signature sheets of the Declaration are available to analyse. The Covenant was a not traditional petition to Parliament; it was not directed at anyone in particular but rather was Unionist men pledging themselves in 'solemn covenant' and in 'sure confidence that God

will defend' their right to refuse Home Rule.[763] The Women's Declaration was more of a statement of loyalty to 'associate' themselves with the men.[764] Although not addressed to any authority directly, in other respects these documents shared the characteristics of a petition, most crucially in containing a signatory list. The Declaration and Covenant were part of a broader shift away from the traditional mode of mass petitioning the House of Commons, as also shown by the Edwardian women's suffrage movement examined in the previous chapter. Refusing to address the Covenant and Declaration to a particular authority was a way of denying acknowledgment of the legitimacy or authority of a Liberal government and House of Commons, controlled by Liberals and Irish Nationalists. A Covenant, as Laura A.M. Stewart has found, was more than an oath or religious bond and went further by 'invoking mutual promises and obligations, entered into by God and man' with an 'insistence on a relationship between God and people that was direct and unconditional'.[765] The Covenant and Declaration were thus more of a public contract and bond between signatories and in the men's case at least, implicitly, with God.

The privilege of signing the Covenant was for men only, while the Declaration was designed for women so that they could express support for the former document. While the Covenant implied a pact with God, the Women's Declaration was a promise to support the men. A key role was played by the Ulster Women's Unionist Council (UWUC), which was founded on 23 January 1911 'with the incipient intent of supporting male unionists opposition to Home Rule for Ireland.'[766] Barely a month after its formation, the UWUC could boast a

[763] Copy of the Solemn League and Covenant, Public Record Office of Northern Ireland (PRONI), D1327/3/2478
[764] Maria Luddy and Diane Urquhart, (eds.), *The Minutes of the Ulster Women's Unionist Council and Executive Committee, 1911-40 (*Dublin, 2001), p. 68.
[765] Laura A.M. Stewart, *Rethinking the Scottish Revolution: Covenanted Scotland, 1637-1651* (Oxford, 2016), p. 92.
[766] Urquhart, *Coming into the Light*, p. 94.

membership of 40,000-50,000 spread across thirty-two branches across the north of Ireland.[767] Ulster women's opposition to Home Rule became a mass movement in a way that the other organisations studied in this thesis struggled to achieve. In total, 228,999 women in Ulster signed the Declaration.[768] Rather than mobilising women to campaign for reform, like the suffrage movement, signing the Declaration was more about confirming and defending their identities as Unionists and Protestants. It is also important to note that despite their phenomenal campaign, 'women's designated political role was not transformed', as women were 'content to perform auxiliary work'.[769] The UWUC did not have an official stance on suffrage, although some members were opposed to it.[770] It was not founded to advance the cause of women, but to act as an ancillary organisation to the Ulster Unionist Council (UUC). Despite their auxiliary stance, the UWUC still contributed to the mass politicisation of Irish women, even if this was not their intention. Conservative mobilisations, as seen with the gradual acceptance of the lower classes into the eighteenth-century Loyalist movement, could advance 'a process of mass participation which they had come into existence to prevent.'[771] It is vital to studies on women's political mass organisation and networking skills to acknowledge and analyse the work that they did during this time; particularly with their approach to petitioning and to the Women's Declaration.

Aside from a brief mention by Alvin Jackson, general scholarship on the Home Rule crisis of 1912-14 has largely ignored the role of women.[772] This

[767] Urquhart, *Women in Ulster Politics*, p. 61.
[768] *Belfast Newsletter*, 23 Nov. 1912, p. 7.
[769] Urquhart, *Women in Ulster Politics*, p. 61
[770] Ibid, pp. 23-24.
[771] Mark Philp, 'Vulgar Conservatism, 1792-3', *English Historical Review*, 110:435, (1995), p. 45
[772] A.T.Q. Stewart, *The Ulster Crisis: Resistance to Home Rule, 1912-1914* (London, 1967); Paul Bew, *Ideology and the Irish Question: Ulster Unionism and Irish Nationalism, 1912-1916* (Oxford, 1994); Alvin Jackson, 'Unionist Politics and Protestant Society in Edwardian Ireland', *Historical Journal*, 33:4 (1990), pp. 839-866.

chapter will establish women's role in the anti-Home Rule campaign by re-emphasising their contributions through petitioning and the Women's Declaration. Quite a small number of scholars have previously focused upon gender, women, and Unionism. Jane G.V. McGaughey has identified the impact and masculinity of the Covenant and does acknowledge the contributions of women to the Unionist campaign.[773] McGaughey's work, however, lacks a detailed investigation into the contributions of Ulster women and this chapter will expand on this by examining the gender segregation of Ulster Day and how Ulster women made their mark on Ulster Day, despite their secondary positions. The historiographical void on Ulster women's role in Unionism has been rectified by Diane Urquhart, who has suggested that much historical attention has focused on the tension between Unionism and Nationalism, largely without reference to gender: but now a 're-interpretation is necessary to include women's participation.'[774] Comparing the Declaration to the role of women's petitioning in the previous decades will enhance this perspective.[775] Pamela McKane has analysed the gender segregation of Ulster Day and the language of the Declaration, but does not focus on the Declaration as a form of women's political petitioning.[776] This chapter contributes to these studies by considering the Declaration as a form of petitioning culture as well as its impact on the broader politicisation of women.

The first and second sections of this chapter examine how Ulster women protested through petitions prior to the Women's Declaration. These demonstrated their organisational abilities, which would become even more

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[773] Jane G.V. McGaughey, 'No Surrender? The Legacy of the Ulster Solemn League and Covenant', *Journal of Transatlantic Studies,* 11:2 (2013), pp. 213-230; Jane G.V. McGaughey, *Ulster's Men: Protestant Unionist Masculinities and Militarization in the North of Ireland, 1912-1923* (Montreal & Kingston, 2012).
[774] Urquhart, *Coming into the Light*, pp. 93-94.
[775] Urquhart, *Coming into the Light*; Urquhart, *Women in Ulster Politics.*
[776] Pamela McKane, '''No idle sightseers'': The Ulster Women's Unionist Council and the Ulster Crisis (1912-1914)', *Studi Irlandesi: A Journal of Irish Studies* 8: (2018), pp. 327-356.

sophisticated through the *Ne Temere* petitioning campaign of 1912. These sections will examine how and why they were so successful in collecting signatures compared to earlier women's organisations. The third and fourth sections will then examine the Women's Declaration and the mechanics of its organisation. On the one hand, the Declaration provides evidence of how Unionist women were ascribed an important but secondary role in the fight against Irish home rule; yet on the other hand, the petitionary process was significant in promoting widespread political participation. The fifth and sixth sections expand on this by examining the material culture of the petition itself as well as an analysis of the demographics of the signatories. The seventh section studies the reception of the Declaration by the press, which reveals the gendered attitudes of even sympathetic newspapers. The final section then examines the tense relationship between the suffrage and Unionist movement by examining how suffrage activists perceived and looked down on the Women's Declaration. Overall, a reassessment of the Women's Declaration will demonstrate the power of name-signing even when unmoored from the traditional form of petitioning.

Early petitioning campaigns

Although Ulster women did not have an organised formal structure to co-ordinate their activity until the foundation of the UWUC in 1911, they had been active in opposing the first and second Home Rule Bills in 1886 and 1893 respectively.[777] In the latter case, women from Ulster travelled across Britain and Ireland, speaking and holding meetings.[778] However, during these years, as Alvin Jackson rightly judges, their 'political activity occurred only as a result of temporary, individual initiative, and not through any systematic leadership.'[779] The main method employed by Unionist women, before and after the

[777] Diane Urquhart, *Women in Ulster Politics*, p. 46.
[778] Ibid, pp. 48-49.
[779] Jackson, 'Unionist Politics', p. 852.

establishment of the UWUC, was petitioning. In 1886 and 1893, Unionist women petitioners protested that home rule threatened their identities as Protestant Unionists and would lead a Catholic ascendancy over Protestants. The movement united Protestants across denominational boundaries on account of their shared Unionist identity, which Andrew Holmes has identified as complex and 'imperial, British, Irish and Ulster identities could be utilised for different reasons depending on circumstance.'[780] In April 1893, a petition to Parliament against Gladstone's Government of Ireland Bill from 'women of Ulster' was signed by 19,631 petitioners and presented by John Ross, MP for Londonderry City.[781] This was just one example of the Unionist women's petitions that will be examined in this chapter that had a large numbers of signatories, much larger in comparison to the women's organisations examined in previous chapters. This chapter will show that this was likely due to the broad base of support from Unionist communities as Unionist opposition of Home Rule was an issue that went beyond middle-class circles to working-class groups. This meant that Unionist petitions were more widely signed than the petitions organised by organisations such as the DWSA, who relied on the support from their own middle-class social circles.

In addition to petitioning Parliament, Unionist women also appealed to the Queen as a woman, the embodiment of the union, and the defender of Protestantism. In May 1886, Ulster women directly petitioned the Queen to support their campaign against Home Rule, the resulting document was signed by 30,000 women and was 271 yards long.[782] The petition was organised to ensure that the first three signatures represented different aspects of their organisation. The first signature was that of Mary Anne, Duchess of Abercorn, representing the

[780] Andrew Holmes, 'Presbyterian Religion, Historiography, and Ulster Scots Identity, c. 1800 to 1914', *The Historical Journal*, 52:3 (2009), pp. 618-619
[781] SCPP, *Reports* (1893), p. 556.
[782] *Freeman's Journal*, 17 May. 1886, p. 6.

Irish nobility; the second was that of Catherine Celia Knox, wife of the Protestant bishop of Down, Connor and Dromore, representing the church; while the third, Florence Henderson, later became honorary secretary of the UWUC, 1911-12.[783] The emphasis on representatives of different orders – the aristocracy, the clergy and the people – reveals some of the social limitations of the earlier Unionist women's movements.

Furthermore, the petitioning process, in the absence of formal organisation, was largely dependent on elite patronage and middle-class networks. For example, in 1893 Ellen Louisa Francis, who was very active in Unionist politics in Belfast and Ulster, particularly during the Home Rule Crisis, organised another petition to the Queen.[784] The circulars publicising the petition requested that all 'leading women' place a request for copies of the women's petition for their respective district. This petition was, however, also open to all women of 'whatever religion' and 'will be the voice of Ulsterwomen solid.'[785] Yet, Francis revealed the importance of aristocratic patronage to her enterprise by specially thanking elite figures such as Viscountess Templetown, Lady Ewart and 'Honourable' Mrs. Walter Stannus, particularly for their aid in overcoming the 'great difficulties' in obtaining signatures from villages and cottages in remote country districts.[786] Francis's petition was referred to as 'another monster petition' by the A*berdeen Press and Journal* as it reported that the petition had 142,000 signatures and 42,000 of these were from Belfast and the remainder were 'loyalist women in other parts of Ulster.'[787] Francis referred to the petition as a 'complete success' and claimed that women of Ireland of 'all creeds, classes, and parties'

[783] *Freeman's Journal,* 17 May. 1886, p. 6; For biographical detail on Florence Henderson, see Luddy and Urquhart, *The Minutes of the Ulster Women's Unionist Council,* p. 4.
[784] *Northern Whig,* 13 May. 1893, p. 6; For biographical information on Ellen Louisa Francis, see *Belfast Telegraph,* 19 Jul. 1909, p. 3.
[785] *Northern Whig,* 13 May. 1893, p. 6.
[786] *Belfast Weekly News,* 26 Aug. 1893, p. 7.
[787] *Aberdeen Press and Journal,* 25 Aug. 1893, p. 6.

looked at the Home Rule Bill as bringing about 'unheard-of calamities to her people'[788] Evidently, while the petition was open to all women, Francis reached out specifically to women who were well known and prominent within their communities to organise petitioning signing.

A similar petition to the Queen was organised by Lady Antrim also in 1893 and again reveals the reliance of these women on their middle-class and elitist Unionist circles, as well as a lack of co-ordination between them. This petition campaign followed a similar formula in reaching out to Unionist women residing in various communities to canvass for signatures. Lady Antrim's petition produced signatures from North, East and South Antrim, including 1,401 organised by Miss Leslie Hill in Ballymoney, 1,718 gathered by Mrs Young in Ballymena, and 1,786 collected by Mrs George Clarke in Lisburn.[789] Not everyone agreed to help Lady Antrim, however; a Miss Cox in Portrush denied the request as she was already 'helping on one that has been started in Portrush' and that it 'would make both petitions useless, if the same women appeared in both and bring down ridicule on the heads of the petitioners.'[790] This was likely in reference to the petition Ellen Louisa Francis had already arranged, as examined in the previous paragraph. In reply, Lady Antrim noted that her petition had nothing to do with Francis's petition and so both could be signed by the same person.[791] This response from Cox reveals anxiety surrounding organising multiple, similar, petitions to the Queen and the fear that they would not be taken seriously as a result. However, Lady Antrim's response highlights the

[788] *Belfast Weekly News*, 26 Aug. 1893, p. 7.
[789] Signature returns, 22 May – 27 May, 1893, Papers pertaining to the organisation in County Antrim of the women's petition to Queen Victoria against Home Rule, April 1893-June 1893. D4091/B/4/1/11-15, PRONI.
[790] Letter from Miss Cox to Lady Antrim, 23 May. 1893, Papers pertaining to organisation in Co. Antrim. D4091/B/4/2/15, PRONI.
[791] Lady Antrim note, undated, Papers pertaining to organisation in Co. Antrim. D4091/B/4/2/2, PRONI.

longstanding expectation that petitions on similar or identical issues might well capture overlapping bases of support.

This reaction to this campaign also demonstrates how the gathering of petition signatures revealed hitherto hidden differences of opinion between Ulster women. Alice O'Neill turned down Antrim's request to canvass as she claimed that 'my sympathies and those of the people round my home are all with the other Party.'[792] Clearly O'Neill's friends assumed she would be on the same side, however, that was not the case which suggests that O'Neill was either a Catholic or a pro-Home Rule Protestant. This demonstrates how the activity of organising a petition reveals the differences of opinion when organisers, such as Antrim, assumed their acquaintances would have the same view on Home Rule. The campaign struggled to obtain signatures from Catholics. One canvasser, Thomas H. Torrens, reported to Lady Antrim that one Roman Catholic signature had been collected while other canvassers such as C.J. Stawells claimed that Roman Catholics refused to sign and Stawells was concerned 'it is because they have been told by their clergy they will deprive them of their religious rites in cases of illness, this I know to be quite true'.[793] C.G. Stammers also reported that no Romanist signed the petition from Lisburn as 'they dare not do it'.[794] The fact that they were asking Catholics to sign the petition indicates that there was still some inter-denominational interactions within Unionism and Nationalism in this period. While both Ellen Louisa Francis and Lady Antrim's petitions were clearly open to all religious denominations, it is clear that support from Catholics was

[792] Alice O'Neill to Lady Antrim, 22 May. 1893, Papers pertaining to organisation in Co. Antrim. D4091/B/4/2/9, PRONI.
[793]. C.J. Stawells to Lady Antrim, 24 May. 1893, Papers pertaining to organisation in Co. Antrim. D4091/B/4/2/24, PRONI; Thomas H. Torrens to Antrim, 26 May. 1893, Papers pertaining to organisation in Co. Antrim. D4091/B/4/2/30, PRONI
[794] C.G. Stammers to Lady Antrim, 6 Jun. 1893, Papers pertaining to organisation in Co. Antrim. D4091/B/4/2/49, PRONI.

very rare and the success of these petitioning campaigns relied on Protestant communities.

These early petition campaigns relied heavily on the patronage and assistance of the aristocracy due to the influence they possessed within their respective communities. Most members of the UWUC came from a middle class or aristocratic background. They boasted membership from women such as Theresa the Marchioness of Londonderry and Mary Anne, the duchess of Abercorn who would become the first president of the UWUC. Urquhart has found that during the third Home Rule crisis, 'the social contacts of the female Unionist elite were effectively used to foster support in England.'[795] In some ways then, the UWUC merely formalised the leadership of Unionist women by the aristocracy who had earlier used more informal networks and influence.

A further advantage of aristocratic leadership was the social and political connections that these women had with elite politicians. In August 1893, a Mrs Frances of Belfast, accompanied by Lady Trevor and Lady Arthur Hill presented a petition to Lord Salisbury, the Conservative leader and former Prime Minister, at Westminster.[796] This Mrs Frances was most likely Ellen Louisa Francis as she was very active in the anti-Home Rule campaign in Belfast at this time.[797] Therefore, it is possible that the paper misspelled her name. This petition was signed by 'upwards of one hundred thousand women of Ulster against the Home Rule bill.'[798] It seems that the women turned to Salisbury after the Liberal Home Secretary H.H. Asquith had refused to allow the women to present the petition in person to the Queen as he argued it would 'establish an inconvenient precedent.'[799] This demonstrates how the women were determined to get

[795] Urquhart, *Women in Ulster Politics*, p. 63.
[796] *Freeman's Journal*, 26 Aug. 1893, p. 6.
[797] *Belfast Telegraph*, 19 Jul. 1909, p. 3
[798] *Freeman's Journal*, 26 Aug. 1893, p. 6.
[799] *HC Debs* 14, cc. 121-2, 14 August 1893.

attention for their petition and to present it to an authority in person. Salisbury recognised the strong opposition against Gladstone and said he 'was willing to put it to the deputation that a vigorous and uncompromising opposition should be observed in reference to the progress of the bill.' He also believed that the views of such 'a large number of Ulster women' should be recognised by leaders of the opposition.[800] This petition reveals the variants of Unionist women's petitioning campaigns of the 1880s and 1890s. These petitions organised by Unionist women, such as Ellen Louisa Francis and Lady Antrim, were likely to generate newspaper coverage and publicity as they could appeal to the Queen's sympathy as a fellow woman. There were, however, obvious limitations as these petitioning campaigns were scattered and organised sporadically on the initiative of these women. There was no systematic organised campaign as seen later with the formation of the UWUC. The fact that Lady Antrim and Francis both organised separate yet identical petitions simultaneously, rather than combining their efforts to create an even larger petition, showed the lack of co-ordination across these communities.

The 1912 *Ne Temere* petition

Women became much more organised as part of concerted Unionist campaigning in the early twentieth century. Unionist women submitted a petition in protest of the *Ne Temere* papal decree of Pius X to the Commons on 11 June 1912. The decree threatened to nullify marriages between Protestants and Catholics unless 'solemnised according to the rites of the Roman Catholic Church.'[801] This protest against the decree became a proxy for the Home Rule struggle, as their petitioning campaign drew on similar anxieties amongst Unionist women - namely the perceived attack on their rights as Protestants and fear of Catholicism across all Ireland, including Ulster. This petition was clearly a predecessor to the

[800] *Freeman's Journal*, 26 Aug. 1893, p. 6.
[801] Luddy and Urquhart, *The Minutes of the Ulster Women's Unionist Council*, p. xvi.

Declaration, enabling Unionist women to demonstrate and perfect their organisational capacities, particularly in terms of obtaining signatures. The *Ne Temere* was also an issue that gendered the Home Rule question: it was perceived as specifically affecting the rights of Protestant Women rather than men. Unionist women thus had a particular reason to object to a Catholic-dominated Irish Parliament. While sensitive to the gender identities with regard to religion, Unionist women seem to have been less troubled by the omission of women's suffrage from the Irish Home Rule Bill. However, their priority was to maintain the union with Britain, so it is unclear how far this signalled a wider opposition to votes for women.

Whatever their position regarding suffrage, by petitioning in 1912 Unionist women created a new political role as part of an organised, mass movement. Demonstrating the opinions of those at the time, Ronald McNeill recalled his memories of 1912 and claimed that the decree, 'followed as it was by notorious cases of the victimisation of Protestant women by the application of its principles' and this further discouraged Protestants to accept a 'Catholic Parliament that would have control of the marriage law'.[802] The petition, despite being prepared in only three weeks, measured almost a mile in length.[803] It was so heavy that, according to the *Belfast Newsletter*, it required two men to carry it in a wooden case.[804] The petition was signed by around 104,000 petitioners.[805] Clearly, this petition enabled the mass mobilisation of Unionist women on a scale that had not been done before.

The *Ne Temere* petition was organised with the aim of showing how Home Rule would affect Irish women and it was decided to encourage Dublin women

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[802] Ronald McNeill, *Ulster's Stand for Union* (London, 1922), p.11.
[803] Nancy Kinghan, *United We Stood: The Official History of the Ulster Women's Unionist Council 1911-1974* (Dublin, 1907), p. 20; *Belfast Newsletter,* 11 Jun. 1912, p. 8.
[804] *Belfast Newsletter,* 11 Jun. 1912, p. 8.
[805] The *Belfast Newsletter*, 11 Jun. 1912, p. 8, gives 104,301 signatures, the SCPP, *Reports* (1912), app. 6, records 103,990 signatures.

to sign their signatures also.[806] The heavily gendered wording of the petition suggests there was an effort made to present their protest as one representing all Irish women and to show that the protest spread even outside of Ulster. The prayer listed six reasons why Home Rule would be 'injurious to the common interests of our countrywomen', all of which encapsulated the fear of Catholic control if Home Rule were passed with specific gendered rhetoric.[807] The wording aimed to appeal to the concerns of signatories as the petition warned of the 'serious dangers' that threatened women's 'social and domestic liberties' if legislation was to fall under the dominance of the Roman Church, which claimed an 'uncontrolled jurisdiction in the provinces of education and marriage laws.'[808] The text, which focused mainly on marriage and education, reveals the issues which organisers anticipated would be the best motivators to sign. The petition noted the dominating power 'of ecclesiastics over education in Ireland' which they claimed was 'already excessive'.[809] Legislation concerning education would affect children and led Unionist women to mobilise their domestic authority as mothers against the papal decree. As Diane Urquhart has identified, Unionist women 'developed a gendered argument which highlighted the sanctity of the home' and female participation 'was aligned to the protection of familial life.'[810] In this sense, the petitioners drew on the older conservative language of domestic authority to claim a space in public debate, also seen in the cases of the DWSA/IWSLGA and DWTA. Yet the petitioners differed from their forbears in directing party political criticism at their enemies, denouncing the 'slavish acquiescence' of Irish Nationalist MPs in regards to the 'iniquitous enforcement'

[806] Luddy and Urquhart, *The Minutes of the Ulster Women's Unionist Council,* p. 52.
[807] SCPP, *Reports* (1912), app. 6.
[808] Ibid.
[809] Ibid.
[810] Diane Urquhart, '" Open the Eyes of England": Female Unionism and Conservatism, 1886-1914' in Clarisse Berthezène and Julie V. Gottlieb, (eds.), *Rethinking right-wing women: Gender and the Conservative Party, 1880s to the present* (Manchester, 2018), p. 17.

of the *Ne Temere* decree.[811] Evidently and unsurprisingly, the signatories did not trust either Irish Nationalist MPs nor the Catholic church.

While primarily grounded on gendered and religious identities, the *Ne Temere* petition also expressed concern for 'women engaged in industrial work' as they claimed that Irish Nationalist MPs opposed protective legislation for women, leaving them vulnerable. This reason suggests a broadening of the intended social constituency that Unionist women sought to mobilise in comparison with earlier campaigns. The final reason definitively stated that no 'valid reason has been advanced for depriving Irish women of the rights and privileges which they now enjoy.'[812] As seen in earlier chapters, women often took advantage of their femininity in order to campaign on certain issues. In this case, the fact that the decree could change the institution of marriage allowed women to take advantage of their domestic authority to show why the decree would affect them personally.

The petitioners struck a fine balance between formulating its protestations around matters pertaining to gender and religion. Their protest against ecclesiastical control was but one example of the wider concern of all Unionists over the potential increased spread of Catholicism in Ulster. Paul Bew has found that one Unionist pamphlet on the Home Rule crisis ably encapsulates this delicate scale. Like the women's petition, *Ulster's Protest* ensured a list of industrial, political, and imperial reasons for refusing Home Rule, not just religious ones; but according to the author of the pamphlet, there 'really is no denying the specifically religious or sectarian tone of much of the controversy.'[813] A.T.Q. Stewart found that it was strange that a measure 'as limited' as the Home Rule Bill would 'engender such political passion.'[814] Even if Home Rule was

[811] SCPP, *Reports* (1912), app. 6.
[812] Ibid.
[813] As quoted in Bew, *Ideology and the Irish Question*, p. 29.
[814] Stewart, *The Ulster Crisis*, p.58.

'limited', for Unionists it still represented the spread of Catholicism throughout Ireland and acted as a threat against Ulster women's identities as Protestants.

When placed in the context of fears of papal influence in Ireland and that an 'independent Irish administration would be dictated to by the bishops and that consequently their civil and religious liberty would in some way be curtailed', the intensity of feeling is more understandable.[815] Therefore, it is notable that the women's petition was able to combine gendered fears over education and marriage with fears over Catholicism. The UWUC's petition took advantage of these fears by putting Irish women in the centre of the effects of a Home Rule Ireland. The petition needed to relate to their identity of womanhood, not just as Protestant Unionist citizens. It also needed to attract the attention of working-class women by mentioning dangers to their industrial liberties to ensure the attainment of signatures of all classes of women, not just the middle classes. It was also vital that the petition could justify or show the value of a women's specific petition by highlighting particular reasons to petition as women rather than women signing alongside men as 'inhabitants.' As noted with women's domestic authority, this petition demonstrated how women were becoming an expert group with a particular (feminine) voice to express their concerns separate to their role as British subjects. Their attempts to reach out to women outside of Ulster is also indicative of their aims to show how widespread the Unionist movement was, and perhaps explains their success in garnering signatures.

The petition against the decree again demonstrates how integral the aristocracy and the idea of respectability was to the UWUC and women's Unionist petitions. Continuing to highlight the continued importance of the aristocracy in the movement, the three named signatories were Theresa,

[815] Ibid, p. 43.

Marchioness of Londonderry, Mary, Duchess of Abercorn and Hariot, the Dowager Marchioness of Dufferin and Ava.[816] This demonstrates how aristocratic women were patrons or sponsors to lead the signing by other women as evidenced by the fact that only elite women were the named signatories on the petition. The *Ne Temere* petition demonstrated the evolving organisational abilities of Unionist women as they effectively propagandised the fears and anxieties of Protestant women in order to protest increasing Catholic involvement in Ireland. It gave an insight into the gendered and religious issues that Protestant women were protesting against and the methods utilised in this petitioning campaign would be emulated in the largest Irish women's petition of the long nineteenth century, the Ulster Women's Declaration.

Drafting the Declaration

The drafting of the Women's Declaration reveals that it was a document conceived by and largely drafted by men, showing some of the limitations on the political agency of women in the anti-Home Rule campaign. This contrasts with the earlier petitions discussed, as in this case men were permitting women to sign, whereas women were in charge of the earlier petitions. It is notable that the Declaration had the most women signing it, but had the least leadership on the part of women in organising the text. The Women's Declaration was arranged to be signed on 28 September 1912 in conjunction with the men's Covenant. It was no coincidence that 'Ulster Day', as they dubbed it, was organised on a Sunday: the architects of the scheme wanted people to come out of their churches and sign *en masse* as a powerful, collective, public statement of Unionism. Although these documents addressed a secular, constitutional controversy, the Covenant and Declaration were linked to mobilisation of religious communities, like many of the mightiest petition campaigns of the long nineteenth century. The mass

[816] SCPP, *Reports* (1912), app. 6.

signing was planned by the UUC as a carefully staged event that was preceded by a series of other activities. Edward Carson conceived the campaign as being advanced by a series of demonstrations, culminating in mass protests on Ulster Day, when loyalists would 'dedicate themselves to a solemn Covenant.'[817]

The public signing of the Covenant was originally intended to be an entirely masculine event, with signatories making a direct petition and promise to God himself; pledging to resist all attempts to bring Home Rule to Ireland. Women were not included in the Covenant but Thomas Sinclair, UUC member and the author of the Covenant, drew up a 'Women's Declaration'. While drafting up the document, Sinclair was open to suggestions from the UWUC, but ultimately, they were not the authors of the document, which had to be approved by the UUC.[818] The UWUC were not allowed to draft their own subscriptional document.

The Covenant and Declaration were intended by their male promoters to represent and solidify Ulster citizen's identities as Protestants and Unionists in Ireland. However, as Pamela McKane has analysed, these documents were heavily 'gender segregated' and made it evident that 'authority and leadership were accorded to masculine Ulster.'[819] The 'Solemn League and Covenant' was a promise between Ulster men and God alone, and there was no space for women in this masculine sphere. The Declaration was conceived as an adjunct to the Covenant, revealing the assumptions of male Unionist leaders that women's role in the campaign was to be limited to 'supportive, passive feminine nation-work', while the Covenant invoked 'action in the masculine nation work of defending

[817] Stewart, *The Ulster Crisis,* p. 59.
[818] McKane, '''No idle sightseers''', p. 344.
[819] Ibid.

their "equal citizenship in the United Kingdom"'.[820] Unionist men wanted women to be an essentially passive support, but with women's religious and political identity as Protestants and Unionists trumping their gender identity. The women's supportive role was important in highlighting how family and religious issues could be used to justify why Home Rule would be a threat to the Protestant Unionist way of life. Even when allowed to sign a Declaration, women were swearing loyalty to supporting Ulster men rather than appealing to God.

The content of the texts of the Declaration and Covenant was markedly different, revealing further gendered differences between conceptions of men and women's roles within popular Unionism. The Covenant was longer and more emotive, for example, it claimed that the implementation of Home Rule would be 'disastrous' to Ulster and all of Ireland.[821] The Covenant argued that Home Rule would subvert the 'civil and religious freedom' of Ulstermen and would threaten their equal citizenship in the United Kingdom. Rather than appealing to Parliament or the Liberal government, the Covenant appealed to a higher authority, claiming the approval of God himself to resist the introduction of Home Rule. The Covenant emphasised that it was the 'MEN of Ulster' who were signing as loyal subjects of King George V.[822] McKane notes that the men's Covenant represented a militant and masculine Ulster as its wording 'invoked action.'[823] The text 'in using all means which may be found necessary' implied resistance through force and Jane G.V. McGaughey has acknowledged the 'martial aspect' of the Covenant as these words 'legitimised the establishment' of the paramilitary Ulster Volunteer Force 'in the minds of the signatories as an

[820] Pamela McKane, 'The Ulster Crisis and the Emergence of the Ulster Women's Unionist Council' on the Women's Museum of Ireland blog, [https://womensmuseumofireland.ie/articles/the-ulster-crisis-and-the-emergence-of-the-ulster-women-s-unionist-council] [Last Accessed, 2 November 2019].
[821] Copy of the Solemn League and Covenant, Ulster Solemn League and Covenant and Ulster Declaration. D1327/3/2478, PRONI.
[822] Ibid.
[823] McKane,' ''No idle sightseers"', p. 345.

organisation meant to defend the best of British and imperial sensibilities.'[824] This document was not just a promise to God, but also a threat to use force against the establishment of Home Rule in Ireland.

By contrast, the Declaration, on paper, ascribed women a more passive role. While echoing the Covenant's interpretation of the likely effects of Home Rule, the central focus of the Declaration was articulating women's 'desire to associate ourselves with the men of Ulster in their uncompromising opposition to the Home Rule Bill.'[825] The Covenant and Declaration were drafted to ensure gender segregation and relegate women as supporters and witnesses, rather than direct contributors. Yet by signing the Declaration, women were directly supporting the militant threats of the Covenant, which was not a passive action. Despite being granted this secondary role on paper, the participation of women on Ulster Day still granted them the opportunity for politicisation and mobilisation on a scale that had not yet been achieved by other Irish women's organisations of the long nineteenth century.

The practice of signing the Declaration

If the Declaration was drafted by male Unionists in ways that sought to limit women's role to that of supporters, the organisation and orchestration of the rituals of mass subscription acted as a catalyst for women's political participation and agency. The UWUC organised mass meetings to promote the unionist cause; often attracting large numbers of attendees, such as at their meeting held in the Ulster Hall in Belfast on 30 September 1912, in which it was claimed to be the largest women's meeting ever held in Ireland.[826] This was not unsurprising however given the maternal nature of the UWUC which sought to attract the support of women into Unionism through ideals surrounding the 'security of

[824] Jane G.V. McGaughey, 'The legacy of the Ulster Solemn League and Covenant', p. 217.
[825] Luddy and Urquhart, *The Minutes of the Ulster Women's Unionist Council,* p. 68.
[826] Ibid.

their homes and wellbeing of their children' which they claimed would be in danger as a result of Home Rule.[827] Urquhart notes that the home was the traditional sphere 'where a woman's influence was socially acceptable, featured prominently in the iconography of women's Unionism.'[828] This was true in some way for the UWUC which did accept the gendered norms set out for aristocratic and middle-class women. Even when the declaration was published in the newspapers the *Northern Daily Mail,* referred to women signing the petition as 'the wives, sisters and daughters of loyalists.'[829] The wording of the declaration and views such as these suggests that women held a secondary position within Unionism.

Despite residing in an apparently subservient position, Unionist women still took an active role in the organisation and signing of the Declaration. Women were so eager to sign that additional spaces were set up in South and East Belfast to facilitate them.[830] The declaration was a highly organised affair and all efforts were made to ensure all Unionist women had the chance to attach their name to the Declaration, even if they were not in Ulster. Despite differences in the wording of the Covenant and Declaration and the lack of input from the UWUC, women were incredibly supportive of Ulster Day as all women Unionists were 'urged' to sign even if they were not members of the UWUC.[831] Women in Ulster actually exceeded men numerically when it came to the number of signatures they collected. The women's signatures totalled 228,999 in comparison to the men who had gathered 218,206 signatures in Ulster.[832] The overall figures, including signatories outside of Ulster, show that men collected 237,368 signatures in comparison to 234,046 from Women, but this does not dispute

[827] Urquhart, *Women in Ulster Politics,* p. 58.
[828] Urquhart, *Coming into the Light,* p. 97.
[829] *Northern Daily Mail,* 10 Sep. 1912, p. 4.
[830] *Northern Whig,* 27 Sep. 1912, p.9.
[831] *Belfast Newsletter,* 26 Sep. 1912, p. 6.
[832] *Belfast Newsletter,* 23 Nov. 1912, p. 7.

women's dominance in Ulster itself.[833] Although women in Ulster exceed the number of men who signed, the difference was not so pronounced based on the overall populations of each. David Fitzpatrick has estimated that 76.7% of non-Catholic men in Ulster signed the Covenant while 72.2% of non-Catholic Women in Ulster signed the Declaration.[834] The population of Ulster at this time was 1,581,696.[835] There were 770,862 men and 810,834 women, which offers explanation as to why there was such a high absolute number of Unionist women signing the Declaration compared to men, even if their relative rate of subscription was slightly lower.[836]

It is worth acknowledging that there were occasions when women signed at the same location alongside men. This suggests that the segregation of women was not enforced in all of Ulster, but it is vital to address whether the reason for this was simply for practical reasons or if it was because women were genuinely treated as equals. The most notable example of this was when women, alongside men, signed the Declaration in the Belfast City Hall. On 5 October 1912, the *Illustrated London News* published an image of women signing the Declaration in the City Hall and Maud Gwendoline Gallagher also signed a printed text of the Declaration in the City Hall on Ulster Day.[837] It is significant that women were granted this opportunity to sign in the Belfast City Hall, which was a place of great importance and centrality to Ulster Day. It was here that the men, including Edward Carson, signed the Covenant and reports by the *Belfast News-letter* described the large gathering as a 'magnificent sight'.[838] It is worth noting however that while some women did sign in the City Hall, many still signed in

[833] Ibid.
[834] David Fitzpatrick, *Descendancy: Irish Protestant Histories since 1795,* (Cambridge, 2014), p. 243.
[835] House of Commons, *Census of Ireland, 1911. Area, houses, and population: Also the ages, civil or conjugal condition, occupations, birthplaces, religion, and education of the people. Province of Ulster* (cd 6051, 1911), p. 17.
[836] Ibid, p. 38.
[837] As cited in Luddy and Urquhart, *The Minutes of the Ulster Women's Unionist Council,* p. vi.
[838] As cited in McGaughey, *Protestant Unionist Masculinities and Militarization,* p. 46.

other places as the *Northern Whig* reported that 'some ten or twelve' places in the four divisions of the city had been selected for women to sign, these 'being chiefly lecture halls attached to the various churches'.[839] It seems that while some women did sign in the City Hall, they were still largely relegated to sign in gender segregated areas in Belfast and other parts of Ulster, which is examined further in the next paragraph. In more rural areas such as Kilbroney and Warrenpoint, the Covenant and Declaration were both signed in the local parish church.[840] There was no element of separation instigated here. Similarly, Ulster men and women residing in Edinburgh attended a historic signing event held in Greyfriars Churchyard, a spot 'made famous in history' by the signing of the Scottish National Covenant two hundred years ago. It was reported that 60 Irish Unionists, both men and women, signed the Covenant and Declaration and it was noted that women outnumbered the men.[841] Rather than demonstrating equality between the sexes, this suggests that signing events in rural areas attracted smaller numbers of people or did not have access to multiple buildings or were isolated events, such as in Scotland.

Despite these exceptions, Ulster Day was very much a gendered event, with 'gender-specific documents, locations and signatures.'[842] It was possible this was done to avoid cross-contamination of signatory lists, as well as the gendering of physical spaces. The *Northern Whig* reported that arrangements had been made for women to sign in '"various lecture halls and other places arranged for that purpose."'[843] In some cases, men signed in exclusively masculine spaces like Orange Lodges. This pattern was replicated across all of Ulster. For example in East Belfast, Bryson Street residents Annie Adair and her daughters Marion and Minnie signed in the Westbourne Presbyterian Church while Adair's sons Robert

[839] *Northern Whig,* 26 Sep. 1912, p. 7.
[840] *Northern Whig,* 2 Oct. 1912, p. 8.
[841] *Aberdeen Press and Journal,* 30 Sep. 1912, p. 5.
[842] McGaughey, *Protestant Unionist Masculinities and Militarization,* p. 48.
[843] As cited in McKane, '" No idle sightseers"', p. 346.

and John were permitted to sign in the Orange Hall.[844] Similarly, in South Antrim, Caulside residents Jane and her daughter Mary of the Taggart family signed in a generic location listed as Islandbawn Antrim Muckamore, while William and his sons William and James Taggart signed in the Antrim Protestant Hall.[845] In Newry, women such as Anna J. Clarke from Crieve signed in the Scriptural School while James Gibson of Crieve signed in the Newry Orange Hall.[846] Even outside of Ulster, in Dublin, there were separate rooms set aside in 109 Grafton Street for men and the 'fair sex' to sign their names.[847] There did not appear to be any separation of different Protestant congregations, as the first signatures on the Covenant featured representatives of the Church of Ireland, the Presbyterian Church and the Methodist church.[848] These differing locations exemplify, as addressed earlier, how the Covenant was viewed as a direct promise with God and was thus the main event. The fact that women signed in schools and churches also suggests an association of the Women's Declaration with the value of a woman's domestic and family role.

Men were granted the right to sign in places of symbolic significance within their respective districts, such as at Protestant Halls, while women signed in lecture halls and schools or local churches and on occasion could sign in the same building as men such as the Orange Hall in Shankill, West Belfast.[849] Advertisements were put into the papers to detail where women could sign on Ulster Day and in the days following.[850] Despite these efforts by the organisers, however, there were cases when women were not aware of this. For example,

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[844] Signatures for East Belfast, Ulster Solemn League and Covenant and Ulster Declaration. D1327/3/4764; D1327/3/4643, PRONI.
[845] Signatures for South Antrim, Ulster Solemn League and Covenant and Ulster Declaration. D1327/3/276; D1327/3/219, PRONI.
[846] Signatures for Newry and South Down, Ulster Solemn League and Covenant and Ulster Declaration. D1327/3/2544; D1327/3/2439, PRONI.
[847] *Dublin Daily Express*, 30 Sep. 1912, p. 6.
[848] McNeill, *Ulster's Stand for Union,* p. 121.
[849] *Belfast Newsletter*, 26 Sep. 1912, p. 6.
[850] Ibid.

some women arrived at the Old Town Hall under the assumption that the Declaration could be signed there also, which was not the case.[851] This reveals how some women did not assume they would be asked to sign in a separate gender specific place. This shows the level of agency and direct action these women had, and serves as an example of what Gleadle has called 'borderline citizenship', alluding to the contested and uncertain parameters of when, where, and what political action might be accepted from women.[852] Arrangements were made later on by John Hamill, the secretary of the UWUC, for women who had not been able to sign on Ulster day to now sign in the Old Town Hall.[853] It is worth noting that this was probably arranged more for logistical reasons rather than ideological.

Even when women's support was valued, they were still treated as separate rather than equal. This could be seen most prominently at protests and parades, such as the Ulster Day processions in Derry, which reserved 'several hundred' seats for women in front of the platform.[854] This indicates that while the women's presence was regarded as being important, indicated by their being seated in front of the platform, the fact that it was only women seated together shows that they were not treated the same as men and thus not treated as equals. Overall, there was a significant divide between the men and women on Ulster Day. The creation of the Women's Declaration ensured that women had a subordinate role as the organisers always intended. Notably, however, when male signatories were given a small printed version of the Covenant as a memento of Ulster Day, a similar document was also printed for the Women's Declaration.[855] Despite this instance of equal treatment of the documents, overall, this was a day for the UUC to exert their masculine militant dominance and the

[851] *Northern Whig,* 1 October, 1912. p. 8.
[852] Gleadle, *Borderline Citizens,* p. 25.
[853] *Belfast Newsletter,* 2 Oct. 1912, p. 6.
[854] *Irish Independent,* 30 Sep. 1912, p. 6.
[855] *Northern Whig,* 4 Oct. 1912, p.7.

women were there to follow from behind. But that does not mean that the significance of their success in collecting a massive number of signatures should not be recognised, as the next section will reveal.

Material Culture

Examining the physical forms of the Covenant and Declaration provides key insights into how these petitions – as material documents – were arranged and organised. The petition paper itself was put together very carefully into folders arranged by the parliamentary division, district, the place of signing, the agent in charge and the number of sheets attached. The number of sheets per folder varied greatly depending on how urban or rural the area was. Notably, the front of these folders did not say Women's Declaration, rather, every folder said 'Ulster Covenant' with men or women noted on the top. Every sheet allowed for 10 signatures and each individual sheet had the wording of the Declaration printed on the heading of the page. Organisers despatched many sheets to each signing building, but when shortages occurred in some areas, such as in Mid-Armagh, lines were drawn onto the back of petition sheets to allow for extra signatures.[856] For those who could not sign in person, arrangements were made to allow them to write out the declaration and sign in their own handwriting. These were then sent to the Ulster Day Committee in the Old Town Hall where the signatures would be verified and added to the count.[857] Some women followed through on this, such as Anna Letitia, Lily McClelland and Annie Johnston from Kilkenny. These women pasted a newspaper cut-out of the declaration to a piece of paper, below which they drew up a name and address section to affix their signatures.[858] Annie McElderry and Annie Megaw wrote out the Declaration

[856] Signatures for Mid-Armagh, Ulster Solemn League and Covenant and Ulster Declaration. D1327/3/1292, PRONI.
[857] *Preston Herald,* 25 Sep. 1912, p. 2.
[858] Signatures for Kilkenny, Ulster Solemn League and Covenant and Ulster Declaration. D1327/3/3848, PRONI.

before signing their names as they were not able to attend in person.[859] These examples demonstrate how women who could not travel, for whatever reason, manufactured their own private replicas to testify support for the cause.

Some women, however, went to great lengths to sign in person. This spoke to the loyalty Unionist women had towards the fight against Home Rule beyond the boundaries of Northern Ireland or indeed the UK, mobilising a wider Protestant Ulster diaspora. Ulster Day offered them a chance to demonstrate their pride in their Protestant background despite being 'exiled loyalists.'[860] Mary O'Neill signed in the Old Town Hall in Belfast South and listed her address as Bloemenhewel Zeist, Holland formerly of 5 College Street East Belfast.[861] One petition sheet, preserved with the sheets from Old Town Hall, had crossed this district out and replaced it with 'place of signing: Baden Baden, Germany Oct 1912'. The accompanying two signatures from Paula Otto Taffe and Eugenia Todd offered addresses in County Down, from where they must have travelled or migrated.[862] These are just some examples of Ulster-born women from all over Europe going to great lengths to sign the Declaration. These instances further reveal the breadth of some of the interconnections and networks associated with women's Unionism and how the Declaration forged a subscriptional community that travelled across national boundaries. However, the next section will consider what the signatures themselves can tell us about women's support for the Union.

Demographic analysis

Unlike other petitions analysed in this dissertation, the Women's Declaration has been preserved and so permits a closer degree of material and prosopographical

[859] Signatures for Dublin, Ulster Solemn League and Covenant and Ulster Declaration. D1327/3/3841, PRONI.
[860] *Preston Herald,* 25 Sep. 1912, p. 2.
[861] Signatures for South Belfast, Ulster Solemn League and Covenant and Ulster Declaration. D1327/3/5325, PRONI.
[862] Ibid.

analysis. Examining the material form of the Declaration also reveals evidence of class segregation on the petition sheets, as more attention was given to the signatures of aristocratic ladies, which was not an uncommon practice at this time. In his study of female American abolitionists, Dan Carpenter has argued that high-status names often appear at the top of petition lists as 'an activist may seek to recruit a number of high-status individuals to sign early' in order to encourage other high-status individuals to sign as well as the lower class.[863] In the case of the Women's Declaration, the *Northern Whig* reported that Theresa the Marchioness of Londonderry was the first to sign the declaration, which was probably done to encourage others to sign after.[864] The *Belfast Newsletter* also reported that the Marchioness signed first in Wynyard Park in Stockton-on-Tees while on a visit there, despite being outside of Ulster, most likely to offer a lead to the women back home.[865] It seems she was the first to sign the Declaration in two different locations, which suggests that the rule of not having repeated signatures was not considered in this Declaration as was with official petitions to Parliament. As the signatory was not being submitted to Parliament, it was not bound by official rules, which allowed the organisers more freedom to organise it as they wished. This differentiates the Women's Declaration even further from traditional definitions of petitioning. Mary Anne, Duchess of Abercorn, was also the first to sign in the Baronscourt and Drumlegagh Church in north Tyrone, where she resided.[866] The signatures of other upper-class women were also publicised in the press, as was the case in Dungannon where Lady Constance Ranfurly and Lady Agnes Daniell were reported in the *Belfast Newsletter* as first

[863] Dan Carpenter, 'Recruitment by Petition: American Abolitionism, French Protestantism, English Suppression', *Perspectives on Politics*, 14:3 (2016), p. 705.
[864] *Northern Whig*, 1 Oct. 1912, p. 8; Signatures for South Belfast, Ulster Solemn League and Covenant and Ulster Declaration. D1327/3/5346, PRONI.
[865] *Belfast Newsletter*, 1 Oct. 1912, p. 10.
[866] Signatures for North Tyrone, Ulster Solemn League and Covenant and Ulster Declaration. D1327/3/3423, PRONI; Irish National Census Entry for the Duchess of Abercorn, [http://www.census.nationalarchives.ie/pages/1911/Tyrone/Baronscourt/Baronscourt/847721/] [Last Accessed, 26 July, 2020].

to sign at the Parochial hall in the district.[867] Thus, in some areas, the aristocracy were granted the privilege to sign before everyone else.

Other signatories felt it was necessary at this significant historic moment to include information on their family background and more importantly to prove they held Ulster lineage if they were not from there originally. Even if a signatory had Unionist sympathies, they could not sign the Declaration if they did not hold Ulster lineage. This was one of the most important stipulations in the rules regarding Ulster Day. Though a British Covenant was organised in support of the Ulster Covenanters.[868] Mary MacLean, for example, signed at Belfast City Hall, and gave her address as Balham, London. She noted that she was the second daughter of James Connell who was a ship builder and ship owner.[869] Agnes Maginn, signing in College Street, West Belfast, noted she was the 'descendant of Samuel Lee, leader of the Apprentice Boys of Derry 1690.'[870] Alice Gillespie, signing in the Old Town Hall, but with an address in Hereford, noted that she was the wife of Captain R.W. Gillespie, the great grandson of General R.R. Gillespie, of Coomber Belfast.[871] These examples reveal how women staked their own claims to famous events, such as the Siege of Derry, which were 'heralded in the Protestant popular imagination as symbols of the entire communities historic struggle against oppression', as Jane G.V. McGaughey argues.[872] This demonstrates the determination of women, who were not born in Ulster, to include these family details in order to sign the Declaration and to assert their heritage as Unionists and Protestants.

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[867] *Belfast Newsletter,* 30 Sep. 1912, p. 10.
[868] McNeill, *Ulster's Stand for Union,* p. 170.
[869] Signatures for South Belfast, Ulster Solemn League and Covenant and Ulster Declaration. D1327/3/5325, PRONI.
[870] Signatures for West Belfast, Ulster Solemn League and Covenant and Ulster Declaration. D1327/3/4522, PRONI.
[871] Signatures for South Belfast, Ulster Solemn League and Covenant and Ulster Declaration. D1327/3/4466, PRONI.
[872] McGaughey, 'The Legacy of the Solemn League and Covenant', p. 217.

Further examination of the class character of the document shows the context in which women were invited to support the Declaration. While there was a great deal of importance afforded to the aristocracy at the head of the signature list, efforts were made to make the campaign as inclusive as possible. Those who could not read or write were able to have someone sign on their behalf as many signatures were found with 'x her mark' written next to them. In some instances, women signed with a mark beside their name even though they were listed as literate in the census, such as Charlotte Taggart, from Smithfield in Antrim.[873] It is possible that she could read, but not write, or that she required assistance due to disability.

The signatures testified a wide variety of class backgrounds. Taking a random sample from 2 signature sheets with a total of 20 signatures in the Old Town Hall, out of the 13 identifiable women on the Irish National Census a picture emerges of working-class signatories to the Declaration.[874] Susan Newberry was a flax spinner; Mary Jane Norwood a household cleaner; Isabella Sykes was a wife of a domestic servant coachman; Lizzie Magee was the wife of a general labourer; Ellen Dickey's daughters and niece worked in the linen trade; Alice Brown's father was a printer compositor; Margaret Black was a smoother in

[873] Signatures for East Antrim, Ulster Solemn League and Covenant and Ulster Declaration. D1327/3/519, PRONI; Irish National Census entry for Charlotte Taggart, [http://www.census.nationalarchives.ie/pages/1911/Antrim/Smithfield/Durham_Street/185778/] [Last Accessed, 18 July, 2019]

[874] Signatures for South Belfast, Ulster Solemn League and Covenant and Ulster Declaration. D1327/3/5319, PRONI.

a wareroom; and Agnes Donaldson's husband was a railway guard.[875] Many who signed in Belfast predictably came from families involved in the shipbuilding trade, with some women having jobs in shipbuilding themselves, such as Lucy Smith who signed in Belfast South and was listed in the census as working in a ship works.[876] There were also signatures from women residing in workhouses, with 19 women signing in Dungannon.[877] The Declaration, then, was intentionally a document that was open to people of all classes, once they were from Ulster they were permitted to sign. This was an opportunity for women of all classes to become involved in a mass political event, even if it was for an exceptional and limited purpose. It allowed women to feel a part of events in society and to display their pride in their heritage which was significant for the introduction of all women, lower classes included, into public spaces.

[875] Irish National Census entry for Alice Brown [http://www.census.nationalarchives.ie/pages/1911/Antrim/Wood_Vale_Ward/Townsend_Street/157540/]; Margaret Black, [http://www.census.nationalarchives.ie/pages/1911/Antrim/Falls__Belfast_/Willow_Street/184625/]Ellen Dickey, [http://www.census.nationalarchives.ie/pages/1901/Antrim/Smithfield/College_Street_West/972948/]; Agnes Donaldson, [http://www.census.nationalarchives.ie/pages/1911/Antrim/Falls__Belfast_/Devonshire/180678/]; Lizzie Magee, [http://www.census.nationalarchives.ie/pages/1911/Antrim/Smithfield/College_Street/185547/], Susan Newberry, [http://www.census.nationalarchives.ie/pages/1911/Antrim/Falls__Belfast_/Elizabeth_Street/180796/]; Mary Jane Norwood, [http://www.census.nationalarchives.ie/pages/1911/Antrim/St__Anne_s_Ward/Little_Grosvenor_Street/182733/]; Isabella Sykes, [http://www.census.nationalarchives.ie/pages/1911/Antrim/St__Anne_s_Ward/Fox_Row/184800/]; [Last accessed, 10 July 2019].

[876] Signatures for South Belfast, Ulster Solemn League and Covenant and Ulster Declaration. D1327/3/4605, PRONI; Irish National Census entry for Lucy Smith, [http://www.census.nationalarchives.ie/pages/1911/Antrim/St__George_s/Matilda_Street/155991/] [Last accessed, 10 July 2019].

[877] Signatures for East Tyrone, Ulster Solemn League and Covenant and Ulster Declaration. D1327/3/3701, PRONI.

Representation in the press

To get a wider understanding of the place of Unionist women in the activities on Ulster Day it is necessary to address how women signatories were portrayed and acknowledged in the press. Such an analysis delves deeper into the inherent misogyny and gender segregation that existed at the root of the Unionist movement. Reports of Ulster Day by the press were skewed to focus primarily on the men's experiences, with women as an afterthought. The press rarely acknowledged women's work or contribution, and rather the focus was on the novelty of how they supported their 'menfolk' by signing too.[878] While the Nationalist press was critical of the Covenant, referring to it as a 'solemn humbug', it also offered little specific comment on the Women's Declaration.[879] The reaction of the press was telling in regards to how Unionist women were treated and seen as lesser in the press. Despite the UWUC being a secondary organisation, the Unionist Liberal paper the *Northern Whig*, remarked that the great meeting held in the Ulster Hall the previous night would 'give the women's movement a tremendous impetus.'[880] This author referenced the UWUC as a 'women's movement' which would typically indicate that the movement was autonomous and centred around women's issues but, in this case, it refers to a movement which has dedicated itself solely to supporting the male Unionist political process. It appreciated the 'enthusiasm' Ulster women had for the cause and noted they were 'quite as one' with their husbands, brothers and sons. [881] This highlighted how the press replicated the Unionist leadership's attitude towards women's place in the movement, who were viewed predominantly as housewives and home makers who did not have a separate political identity apart from that of their male relations. The language used amplified the belief

[878] *Belfast Newsletter,* 23 Nov. 1912, p. 7.
[879] *Kerry Evening Star,* 26 Sep. 1912, p. 2; *The Nationalist (Tipperary),* 28 Sep. 1912, p. 8.
[880] *Northern Whig*, 1 Oct. 1912, p. 8.
[881] Ibid.

that despite the contributions of Unionist women, their role as a mother or a wife would always be celebrated first. Yet the paper did briefly acknowledge the 'business-like' methods of the UWUC, thus showing that there was some acknowledgement of their campaign skills.[882]

As well as reporting on the overall numbers of women signing, reports also highlighted the signatures of high-class signatories, such as that of Lady Annie Hill and Lady Annesley who were reported to have signed in London.[883] Special praise and attention were given to women who came from a high status but there were some exceptions; as seen in the case of sensationalist press reporting of an Ulster Day incident which was incredibly emotive and unrelated to the aristocracy. On Ulster day a tragic incidence had occurred in Downpatrick at the Assembly Hall. It was reported that a widow, Eliza Watterson, had attended a special service in Down Cathedral and later signed the Declaration at the assembly hall. However, immediately after signing her name 'she became suddenly ill, and expired, in a few moments.'[884] This became known in the press as the 'tragedy of Covenant day.'[885] This was one of few occasions where the identity of those non-elite women who signed was deemed important enough to publicize. It was also used as an opportunity to propagandise the day by eliciting feelings of emotion from the public and evoking a sense of sacrifice or martyrdom that chimed with the religious language surrounding Ulster Day.

Propagandising the signing of the Declaration is unsurprising given the Unionist campaign was 'also relentlessly modern to the extent that it exploited a wide variety of propaganda media.'[886] The Covenant itself was a petition which

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[882] Ibid.
[883] *Northern Whig,* 30 Sep. 1912, p. 12. It is unclear if this is Sara or Geraldine Annesley, both names are listed as having signed in Westminster in London. Signatures for London, Ulster Solemn League and Covenant and Ulster Declaration. D1327/3/4092, PRONI.
[884] *Northern Whig,* 30 Sep. 1912, p. 12.
[885] *Belfast Evening Telegraph,* 30 Sep. 1912, p. 6.
[886] Alvin Jackson, *Home Rule: An Irish History, 1800-2000* (Oxford, 2003), p. 118.

built upon 'previous covenanting traditions, in particular the Scottish Covenant of 1643.'[887] It was adapted into an emotive document with the intention to create ceremony and spectacle, as similarly seen with the suffragette organisations examined in chapter 3. As Henry Miller has found, petitioning campaigns in this period needed to adapt to visual media and the popular newspaper press, which otherwise 'made traditional methods appear old-fashioned.'[888] Emotional events, in conjunction with publicity surrounding the aristocracy, would act as a convenient propaganda tool for Unionists who wished to attract the attention of the public and encourage Ulster natives to sign.

The response of the press to the number of women's signatures offers a revealing insight into how women's contributions were at times obscured or simply not celebrated. Publications in Dublin did not offer much comment on the Women's Declaration. The Unionist *Dublin Daily Express* merely published factual reports on the organisation of the Declaration, where it could be signed, and encouragement that all Unionist women should sign, whether they were members of the UWUC or not.[889] When it was revealed that women had surpassed the men in the number of signatures collected in Ulster, some papers were anxious to offer a reason for it. The *Northern Whig* explained that while the women were showing their support for their 'menfolk', they amassed more signatures because they enjoyed a 'numerical superiority' rather than due to any 'slackness' on the part of their 'menfolk'.[890] The paper also ensured to point out that over 19,000 male signatures came from outside Ulster in comparison to just 5,000 females.[891] This article revealed a strange sense of embarrassment that women might be imagined to have outdone the Ulstermen, who were supposed

[887] McCaughey, 'The Legacy of the Ulster Solemn League and Covenant', p. 214.
[888] Miller, 'Practice of Petitioning', p. 22.
[889] *Dublin Daily Express,* 28 Sep. 1912, p. 5; Dublin *Daily Express,* 30 Sep. 1912, p. 6.
[890] *Northern Whig,* 23 Nov. 1912, p. 7.
[891] Ibid.

to be the avid leaders of the Unionist movement. Women were only meant to act as a support and not to be superior in any other way.

Some reports about women signatories were also heavily gendered and emphasised the women's dependence on husbands. Coverage of a meeting of the Bangor UWUC reported that the women had gone to these efforts to pledge 'themselves to assist their menfolk in whatever steps might be necessary to resist the imposition of Home Rule upon them.'[892] The Unionist *Belfast Newsletter* reported on the events with heavily gendered language, referring to Ulster Day as the 'manhood of the city' affixing their names to the Covenant. It noted the attention of the 'gentler sex', claiming that Ulster women played a 'noble part' in the struggle against home rule and 'it was only natural that they should desire to have a share in the ceremonies of Ulster Day.' [893] While acknowledging the contributions of Ulster women, the article still emphasised that women desired to 'associate' themselves with men, who were themselves uncompromisingly opposing the Home Rule Bill by making a promise with God to save Ireland.[894]

Yet, there were some papers that heaped praise onto the efforts of the women and saw it as a particular boon in Ulster's show of strength. The *County Down Spectator and Ulster Standard* published an article entitled 'the women lead' and actually encouraged the men to be incentivised by female successes to further 'great effort in the future.'[895] It praised the women of Bangor for collecting 2,000 signatures, as well as the 'indefatigable energy' of the branch leaders, the organising ability of the ladies, their successful missionary campaigns and 'excellent financial standing.'[896] This was one occasion where women were

[892] *Belfast Newsletter,* 10 Dec. 1912, p. 9.
[893] *Belfast Newsletter,* 30 Sep. 1912, p. 7.
[894] Ibid.
[895] *County Down Spectator and Ulster Standard,* 13 Dec. 1912, p. 4.
[896] Ibid.

actually recognised for their campaigning abilities and not relegated to a statistical afterthought at the end of the article.

Despite women's supposed subversive position within Unionism, some took on challenging, public-facing roles. Mrs Edith Mercier Clements spoke to a large audience at the Bangor meeting and gave a rousing and articulate speech on their mission to reject Home Rule 'in any shape or form.' She spoke in great detail about their loyalty to the great union of Britain and Ireland and was reported to have won a great deal of applause.[897] This example brings forth the debate over the usefulness of 'spheres' as a concept in the historiography on women, as historians such as Gleadle have acknowledged that the private and public spheres often intermingled.[898] The work of the UWUC is a notable example of this, as their conservative views about women's status did not prevent them taking a very public role in both Ulster society and politics. As noted earlier, Unionist men encouraged women to play a supportive role, with women's religious and political identity as Protestants and Unionists coming before their positions as women. However, the campaign required women's politicisation and mobilisation and involvement in activism on an unprecedented scale.

Reports in the press also reveal how some women signatories experienced Ulster Day itself and gave voice to how they felt about the event. In the *Belfast Newsletter* an anonymous 'lady correspondent' recounted her experience of Ulster Day as a resident in London, England. She had hoped to travel to Derry as did many of her other London based Irish peers, but could not do so due to a sprained right elbow. Instead, she signed in Victoria Street where she noticed a large Union flag and wore a UWUC badge and an Apprentice Boys of Derry medal from her brother, again demonstrating an example of the pride signatories took in their Unionist background. According to the correspondent, she was the

[897] *Belfast Newsletter*, 10 Dec. 1912, p. 9.
[898] Gleadle, *Borderline Citizens*, p. 61.

first Derry native woman to sign the petition. As the Declaration was for Ulster born women only, the correspondent noticed there was a number of ladies, not born in Ulster, who were terribly disappointed as their signatures were refused.[899]

Comments from another 'lady correspondent' in September 1912 revealed a traditional view that was often expressed by Unionist women themselves. She wished to emphasise that her main concern was with the Union and not with herself, replicating the constant press refrain of women showing their 'whole-hearted sympathy' for the men.[900] The correspondent passed judgement on the wording of the 'Women's Covenant' and was pleased as it did not step outside of the 'womanly sphere' and did not ask for any 'self or sex advancements.'[901] A woman's part, she suggested, was to 'do all that will best help them in their stand for conscience sake.'[902] Many Unionist women did not wish to appear self-seeking in signing the Declaration. The majority of coverage on Ulster day referred to the women's Declaration as a mere afterthought and was often added onto the end of an article.[903] They were also repeatedly referred to as 'backing up their menfolk.'[904] Their signatures merely viewed as 'gratifying.'[905] These press reports allow for a deeper understanding of the wide and pervasive issue of sex segregation on Ulster Day. These reports demonstrate how the role of women in Unionism was constantly subverted and relegated to focus on ideals of womanhood. Women were rarely praised solely for their campaign skills without some reference to their support of their husbands, brothers and sons. These articles failed to acknowledge the level of political agency these women

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[899] *Belfast Newsletter,* 1 Oct. 1912, p. 4.
[900] Ibid.
[901] *Belfast Weekly News,* 19 Sep. 1912, p. 3.
[902] Ibid.
[903] *Londonderry Sentinel,* 10 Oct. 1912, p. 4; *Ballymena Weekly Telegraph,* 5 Oct. 1912, p. 11; *Belfast Newsletter,* 28 Dec. 1912, p. 9.
[904] *Herald and County Down Independent,* 29 Nov. 1912, p. 7.
[905] *Belfast Newsletter,* 2 Oct. 1912, p. 7

possessed by simply signing the Declaration. By signing it, they were not just mild passive participants, they directly supported the Covenant's threat of violence and militant language.

The Women's Declaration and women's suffrage

As well as examining how the Women's Declaration was addressed in the press, it is necessary to also address how suffrage activists, such as the IWFL, viewed a political mobilisation of women greater than anything they had managed in their own campaign. This is revealing of the complicated relationship between suffrage activists and the UWUC. Despite the fact the UWUC took on an active role in expanding women's political activism, they were still portrayed by the suffrage newspaper the *Irish Citizen* as lowering themselves by signing a document that did not carry the same significance of the masculine Covenant. Diane Urquhart has found that while some suffrage activists had Unionist sympathies, the two viewed each other with suspicion and many Unionists saw suffrage 'as a potentially dangerous political distraction from their anti-Home Rule campaign.' This was one thing on which they could agree with the IPP.[906] Some British militants, such as the Pankhursts, felt indignant that Asquith was reluctant to punish 'Unionist leaders for advocating violence while using the full force of the law against women.'[907] Asquith denied there was any parallel.[908] The difference, of course, was the potential of armed resistance from 218,615 male signatories and the formation of the Ulster Volunteer Force presented more of a threat to the authority of the state than the militancy executed by suffragettes. This shows that divisions existed between Ulster suffragettes and Unionists, which offers explanation as to why there is a lack of evidence of Ulster suffrage activists signing the declaration.

[906] Urquhart, 'The Ulster Suffrage Movement', p. 279.
[907] Pugh, *March of the Women*, p. 174.
[908] Ibid.

The declaration was a representation of Unionism and Unionist pride and according to Vivien Kelly, it was clear that no other issue 'was going to be allowed to divert Unionist women from their immediate task of defeating Home Rule', it was not to be mentioned at any UWUC meetings or by members and visiting speakers.[909] This caused a complicated political divide between Ulster women who supported suffrage first and foremost versus Unionist women who were focused on protecting their Protestant identities. This chapter has identified one example of an Ulster suffrage activist signing the Declaration, which was Annie Entrican, who signed the Declaration in the Old Town Hall in Belfast City.[910] Annie Entrican was a Poor Law Guardian who regularly sold papers for the IWSS.[911] This proves that there was overlap between the loyalties of Protestant women to the Unionist cause and to suffrage. Overall, however, there was a divide between Unionists and women's suffrage campaigners.

Suffragettes actually used Ulster Day to undertake propaganda work on behalf of their own campaign. On Ulster Day the *Irish Citizen* reported that a copy of the paper was delivered by a member of the WSPU, by hand, for Sir Edward Carson at the Ulster Club in Belfast. On the front page a message was written to bring forcible feeding to Carson's attention and demanded that 'Unionists help women to Citizenship' just as Ulster women helped the Unionists by signing the Declaration.[912] The suffragettes continued their protest by throwing posters with the words 'slow death for pure motives' into the crowd from an upper window in the city and a WSPU member sold copies of the *Irish Citizen* to people on the streets.[913] In this case the paper reported that an 'excellent' piece of propaganda

[909] Vivien Kelly, 'Irish Suffragettes at the time of the Home Rule Crisis', *History Ireland,* 4:1 (1996), p. 37.
[910] Signatures for South Belfast, Ulster Solemn League and Covenant and Ulster Declaration. D1327/3/4884, PRONI.
[911] Urquhart, *Women in Ulster Politics*, p. 14.
[912] *The Irish Citizen,* 5 Oct. 1912, p. 159.
[913] Ibid.

work had been done by selling the papers as 'many Belfast men seem to begin to realise that if women are prepared to stand by their men, it may not be an altogether foolish idea to support woman suffrage.'[914] While casting judgement on Ulster Day, suffragettes clearly saw its high-profile publicity as a valuable opportunity to spread their own campaign message.

The *Irish Citizen* revealed the attitudes of suffragettes to the Declaration. The same article claimed that a man questioned a suffragette as to why she was not at City Hall signing the Covenant, to which she responded that only voters were permitted to sign the Covenant and 'doormats' to sign the Women's Declaration in the churches.[915] This supposed interaction revealed how strongly the suffrage movement judged the strong belief from Unionists that if you were from Ulster you were expected to sign and you were under suspicion if you chose not to. These men then asked the campaigners if they would accept the vote being given to the '"weaker' sex" who knew how to behave themselves- i.e., the non-militants.' In response, the women took the opportunity to throw back insults of obsessive madness that were usually thrown at them, by stating that should 'enfranchisement be confined to men who behaved themselves and did not indulge in "Ulsteria", the women could ask no more, as they wanted the vote '"on the same terms"'.[916] This supposed interaction showcases the strong views of suffragettes that women were treated as 'doormats' on Ulster Day and were angered that Unionists were not condemned in the same manner as the suffragettes were.

In the press activists made it clear that they took issue with the Women's Declaration due to its subversive nature of putting women as second to men, despite the efforts of these Unionist women to sign and show their support in the

[914] Ibid.
[915] Ibid.
[916] Ibid.

protest against Home Rule. Blanche Bennett, secretary of the IWSS, published an article in the *Irish Citizen* in which she recorded her observations of the Ulster Covenant procession from her office window. Bennett's findings were very revealing of the distaste some suffragette activists had for Ulster Day as she described the procession as a 'man's show entirely' and regretted that the thousands of women Unionists had not joined the men in their march through Belfast.[917] Bennett believed this would have been a 'magnificent object lesson' to those who argue that women's place is in the home and not in public work.[918] In an attempt to display their disappointment, Bennett and her associates attempted to disrupt the procession by shouting 'votes for women' through a megaphone to draw attention to their banners.[919] Bennett recognised how valuable it would have been for women to join the men on their procession, as this would have proved that women could also be involved in a mass political event alongside men as equals.

For suffrage activists it seemed the involvement of women in Ulster Day was a missed opportunity to champion the role of women in Unionist politics. Their organisational methods could have been a strong argument for allowing women far more responsibilities in public life, such as the right to the vote. During an IWFL demonstration in Phoenix Park, Margaret McCoubrey of the IWSS criticised the Unionists of Ulster for asking women to sign the Declaration despite never having had exhibited 'any strong desire for the enfranchisement of women.'[920] She recalled that it was the typical 'old story' of men wanting the support of the women when it was meant to 'help them to attainment of political power and influence'.[921] McCoubrey noted also that proceedings were a 'farce' as there was 'no such thing as equality' present, due to the fact that women were

[917] *The Irish Citizen,* 26 Oct. 1912, p. 184.
[918] Ibid.
[919] Ibid.
[920] *The Irish Citizen,* 19 Oct. 1912, p. 173.
[921] Ibid.

relegated to signing in the grounds of churches, in one or two lecture halls and 'in hole and corner spots of Belfast.'[922] These women felt very strongly about the hypocrisy and double standards that were promoted by the UUC. It was happy to allow the involvement of women only when it benefitted Unionism but showed no interest in supporting the right of these women to vote despite their success in demonstrating their campaign skills. Yet McCoubrey failed to fully realise how significant it was that so many Unionist women were mobilised to sign this petition. This may not have been a petition in support of suffrage, but it still allowed Unionist women to be politicised on a mass scale.

Suffragettes viewed the Declaration as degrading due to the fact that women would willingly assign themselves as second class citizens by accepting the terms of the Declaration. The *Irish Citizen* acknowledged how Ulster women 'have been invited (and to their shame, have in considerable numbers consented) to append their signatures to a "women's covenant".' [923] The author claimed that the Declaration did not hold any particular significance as it was a mere 'insignificant auxiliary, a pledge to ''stand by their men folk."' Suffragettes felt the document perpetuated the old 'false tradition of women's inequality and unfitness for political thought and action.'[924] Yet they failed to acknowledge how the act of signing alone demonstrated some level of political agency by Unionist women who likely shared the zeal of men signing the Covenant. The Declaration may have been a secondary document, but it was still an agreement on the part of Unionist women to support direct action and militant opposition to the threat of Home Rule. These articles in the *Irish Citizen* show how suffrage activists viewed the Declaration as demeaning on paper as it prevented women from being active participants in the protest, and as such, perpetuated stereotypes that women were not capable of being as politically active as men. Yet, suffrage

[922] *Dundalk Examiner and Louth Advertiser,* 19 Oct. 1912, p. 3.
[923] *The Irish Citizen,* 5 Oct. 1912, p. 157.
[924] Ibid.

activists did not take into account how Unionist women viewed the Declaration as an opportunity to voice their concerns regarding Home Rule and took pride in signing it, even if it was a separate document.

Following the war, the UWUC continued their work to oppose Home Rule and protect the Union from any threats. They were so determined to remain under the Union that they ultimately sanctioned the Government of Ireland Act of 1920, which partitioned Ireland and Ulster became a six-county state with 'limited legislative powers in Ulster.'[925] Unionist women would benefit greatly from the passing of the vote in 1918. They could now express their own political opinions and contribute officially to changes in Parliament through their newfound access to the vote, which they made use of to vote to continually support their men.[926] Their newfound independence perhaps inspired their desire to push to be recognised as equal members of the UUC's constitution in 1916 as they demanded representation on the council and from early 1918 they increased their efforts.[927] Edward Carson, despite being anti-suffrage, accepted their request and promoted their admission. Theresa the Marchioness of Londonderry herself felt able to claim some credit for the advancement of women in politics.[928] Therefore, despite their apparent subservient stance throughout the years of Unionist campaigning, they were ultimately able to help progress the position of women in society, to a certain degree.

Conclusion

This chapter has shown the organisational capabilities of Ulster women through their loyalty to Unionism and their Protestant identities. The UWUC were so successful that their suffrage counterparts were encouraged to imitate the work

[925] Urquhart, *Women in Ulster Politics*, p. 65.
[926] Kelly, 'Irish Suffragettes at the time of the Home Rule Crisis', p. 38.
[927] Urquhart, W*omen in Ulster Politics*, p. 69.
[928] Kelly, 'Irish Suffragettes at the time of the Home Rule Crisis', p. 38.

of the UWUC as they had much success in terms of their membership and abilities in petitioning and other campaign methods.[929] Unionist women had numerous successful petitioning campaigns prior to and following the formation of the UWUC. They were able to appeal to a much larger range of people who shared a common identity and were passionate about protecting it from the threat of Catholic rule in Ulster. The issue of Home Rule also attracted concern from the working classes, this differed significantly from earlier suffrage organisations who struggled to appeal to the lower classes. What this chapter has also shown, is how many of these petitioning campaigns relied on the support and organisational skills of middle and upper-class women and their social circles.

The Declaration acts as an example of the many different forms of petitioning. The Declaration was not a petition to Parliament but rather a support to the Covenant, a martial document in the form of a direct promise to God. Despite not being presented to Parliament, the petition allowed for the mass mobilisation of Unionist women, who were granted the opportunity to defend their identities as Protestant Unionists. It also gave them a sense of civic duty and involvement in public political life. This experience was offered to lower class women too who were encouraged to get involved in Ulster Day and display their pride. This event was mainly focused on Unionism and protecting their Protestant heritage but Ulster day was a significant event in the development of female political involvement as it trained women in political campaign skills. Despite judgement from suffrage activists and their supposed secondary position within Unionism, this chapter has shown that the Unionist women's contributions to Ulster Day were as important as their male counterparts, both by

[929] Urquhart, *Women in Ulster Politics,* p. 23.

organising and signing the Declaration. They proved that women could successfully be involved in political organisations.

Conclusion

Based on the findings in this thesis, the long nineteenth century was a time of notable growth in the politicisation of Irish and British women. For the first time in Ireland's history, this period experienced the emergence of active, organised women's involvement in public participation in politics. This thesis has built on prior Irish women's history in order to dig deeper into the experiences of these women by looking at lesser-known campaign methods, such as petitioning, which as has been shown, was integral to all the movements surveyed. Therefore, this thesis has made two contributions: to the understanding of the gendered political history of Ireland and the history of petitioning, respectively. The thesis has uncovered how these organisations utilised petitioning as a campaign tool and how this reflects on Irish petitioning culture. This thesis proves that an organisation comprised of women did not have to have women's rights at the forefront of its campaign in order to promote and contribute to the political agency and power of women. One of the paradoxes of petitioning was that movements that amplified traditional expectations of women's roles or differences from men could nevertheless catalyse new waves of political participation and activism among Irish women through the practice of petitioning. This conclusion will analyse the main outcomes and findings for the historiography. It will also identify valuable areas for future research, beyond the scope of this thesis.

Chapters 1, 4 and 5 contributed to our understanding of women's place in Irish politics, outside of the formal struggle for suffrage, by examining how women advanced their social positions and gained experience in political life in pursuit of other struggles. However, many women who took a leading role in moral reform movements also featured on the executive committees of suffrage organisations, demonstrating a clear link between the two, and chapter 4 delved into the relationship between the temperance and suffrage movements in both

Ireland and Britain. This connection formed through the idea that women's moral superiority granted them the ability to take on the responsibility of promoting a pure lifestyle, or, as Meghan K. Smitley suggests, the rhetoric of prohibition implied 'that if moral reforms like temperance required legislative action, then feminine moral superiority needed political representation.'[930] The rise of social reform movements, such as the DWTA, was stimulated by ideals regarding social and moral purity, as well as respectability.

The idea of social responsibility, conservative feminism, and the thematic concept of the 'duality of morality' was most evident in chapter 1 with the LNA's dual campaign to eradicate prostitution, as well as defending Irish and British women's rights to bodily autonomy. Through examinations of LNA members, such as Elizabeth Addey, it quickly became clear that concern also lay with maintaining social purity on the streets of Ireland. While disapproving of prostitution, the LNA still used their position to protest the double standards of sexuality, further demonstrating how despite their moral aim, their work still aimed to benefit women overall by protesting the unfair treatment of working-class women by local authorities and by the institutions of medicine and law. Prior to women having the vote, petitioning offered a route to not only influence moral reform but also to protest against social evils.

This thesis has proved that the dominance of moral and social reform movements of the nineteenth century were integral to the progression of women's public political roles. Through campaign methods, such as petitioning, these organisations granted women a voice to speak on taboo topics such as sex, vice and alcohol consumption. Chapter 1 demonstrated how the LNA had to strike a balance between moral reform and the progression of women's rights and overall defended and promoted female autonomy. Judith R. Walkowitz

[930] Smitley, 'Scotland and imperial feminism c. 1870-1914', p. 456.

summarised the role of female moral reformers who 'used rescue work to carve out a special place for themselves in public life' and justified their role as a continuation of their 'traditional role as moral guardians of the family and the community.' This did not mean that they also had a commitment to women's rights but Walkowitz acknowledges that the British LNA publicly linked moral reform to 'the wider goals of female emancipation'.[931] This thesis has shown that in Ireland, petitioning allowed the Irish LNA to utilise a form of campaigning that was open to their initiative and could be used to convey their dual goal of promoting moral reform, while also protecting women.

The women's temperance societies examined in chapter 4 focused primarily on promoting moral reform by equating alcohol consumption to sin. While they did share some ideals with the women's suffrage movement, their main focus was on encouraging temperance. Women's participation in these organisations was permitted due to the conservative idea that their moral superiority would benefit the progression of the movement. Clare Midgely produced similar findings in the Anti-Slavery movement as many leading anti-slavery campaigners were evangelicals and their beliefs 'about women's moral duties were central to the dominant 'separate spheres' ideology and provided the foundation on which women had traditionally based their support for anti-slavery.'[932] This thesis has shown that such ideals were shared by many of the Protestant faith and additionally identified links between moral reform and suffrage organisations through Protestant women, such as Hanna Wigham, who were involved in both.

Suffrage activists relied on similar conservative arguments regarding women's moral authority and traditional ideals of a woman's place in Victorian society. As Philippa Levine argues, feminists had a 'broad range of reasoning' in

[931] Walkowitz, *Prostitution and Victorian Society,* pp. 131-132.
[932] Clare Midgley, *Women Against Slavery: The British Campaigns, 1780-1870* (London, 1992), p. 165.

their demand for the vote, their political arguments 'centred upon issues of equality and representation' while their ethical arguments extended to a 'belief in woman's moral superiority and fitness.'[933] This was certainly the case with the DWSA/IWSLGA, which often relied on arguments regarding women's superior experience in looking after women, children, the poor and the sick, to demand the right to act as Poor Law Guardians and vote in local elections. They also campaigned on behalf of women householders by organising petitioning campaigns which sought signatures only from this cohort to emphasise their desire for franchise. In addition to this, they corresponded regularly with 'influential' women in order to promote them onto local government positions.[934] It is clear that the DWSA/IWSLGA did not seek universal franchise and wanted franchise on the same terms as men, which excluded working-class women from the early suffrage campaign. Overall, this thesis has demonstrated that both moral reform and suffrage movements relied on conservative feminist arguments regarding women's moral authority, which in turn aided in the progression of women's politicisation in this period.

This thesis has contributed to the history of petitioning by examining different forms of petitioning such as the Women's Declaration, a supporting document to the Ulster Covenant. This was not a petition directed to Parliament or any particular authority, but rather a declaration of support to Unionist men who signed the Covenant and delivered a clear threat of war if Home Rule was introduced to Ireland. As examined in chapter 5, one of the UWUC's main goals was to support the UUC and to protest against Home Rule, yet their campaign, alongside the Women's Declaration, contributed to the mass mobilisation of Protestant Unionist women and their introduction into politics. By signing the Women's Declaration, they were actively and directly supporting the martial

[933] Levine, *Victorian Feminism,* p. 59.
[934] IWSLGA report for 1896. AA18427, NLI, p. 3.

threat contained within the Covenant. In addition to this, it allowed women of all classes to get involved in the event that was Ulster Day and to be part of a large political process. As with the LNA and DWTA, members of the UWUC gained valuable experience in political organisation and campaign methods, such as petitioning. The Declaration, as well as earlier Unionist women's petitioning campaigns, allowed women to demonstrate their ability to organise and mobilise women on a mass scale. They proved that women could take on important roles in political organisations and be involved in public life, thus offering arguments for their right to vote and have a say in how government should be run, even if suffrage was not part of the UWUC's campaign. This demonstrates the significant effectiveness of women's petitioning and how integral it was to their campaign. When analysing the development of women's politicisation, it is vital to consider the impact of organisations that had aims that were not central to obtaining the parliamentary franchise.

As well as contributing to literature on the history of Irish women and petitioning, this thesis has also examined the social basis and culture of these women's movements. This has provided findings on many different aspects of organised women's organisations. One notable outcome was the importance of local involvement when it came to setting up organisation branches. The organisations studied in this thesis relied on local 'entrepreneurs', such as the Haslams, to take it upon themselves to devote their time and finances to setting up a local branch. The Haslams would go on to devote most of their lives to furthering the cause of rights for women.[935] This in turn required support from members of their own social circles to join their committees, attend meetings, collect petitions and subscriptions. This was similar to the DWTA forming after inspiration from a meeting of the BWTA. It was equally important for these organisations to rely on the press to publish their meetings minutes,

[935] Quinlan, *Genteel Revolutionaries,* p. ix.

advertisements of public gatherings and also of the petitions they organised and signatures collected. All the organisations in this thesis followed a similar formation pattern as well as similar approaches to campaign methods. While this offered a strength in fostering new activism for women, there were limits in that many of these groups failed to expand outside of their existing social circles. Petitioning, however, offered these organisations a way to spread their message and connect with places outside of their main areas of activity, for example, suffrage petitions were submitted from areas outside of Dublin as identified in chapter 2.[936]

Each chapter has emphasised the dominant role of religion, as common church groups of the Protestant faith were essential to mobilising women. Each organisation examined, apart from the IWFL, were dominated by Protestant middle-class women. Catholic women were deterred from joining as a result of this and their involvement could be found more so with Nationalist or charitable Catholic run organisations. Due to a lack of evidence, it is difficult to come to an absolute conclusion as to why Catholic women were absent from these organisations. This thesis has addressed the significant class disparities that existed between Protestants and Catholics as Protestants dominated middle-class occupations in comparison to the smaller Catholic middle-class.[937] As well as this, as addressed in chapter 4, Protestant women's experience and education in charitable institutions opened up a pathway for their entry into political activism. For lay Catholic women, however, the dominance of nuns in charitable institutions and their roles as secondary fundraisers hindered their political development and entry into political organisations. As well as this, in the case of moral reform organisations, the use of religious imagery in the work of organisations such as LNA and DWTA would have acted as a deterrent to a

[936] List of Petitions. DWSA/9, NAI.
[937] Connolly, *Religion and Society*, p. 4.

potential Catholic membership. This thesis has explored the dominant role of Protestant women within Irish politics and this has subsequently raised the important question of why Catholic women were absent from much of Ireland's early women's organisations. This thesis has shown that this is a phenomenon that deserves further consideration. Further studies on this and the role of women in Nationalism is necessary and will be explored in future projects.

Networking through Church organisation and spiritual motivations regarding concern of salvation were significant factors of influence uncovered throughout this thesis, particularly in chapter 5. Chapter 5 investigated the mass petitioning undertaken by the UWUC who were protesting against Home Rule. These petitioning campaigns were heavily influenced by Unionist and Protestant fears of the growing influence of Catholicism and Nationalism and notably the UWUC had significant successes in terms of the numbers of signatures collected with the Women's Declaration alone collecting 234,046 signatures.[938] Unionists came from all denominations of Protestantism.[939] This again demonstrated how far religion proved to be an important spur to – and beneficiary of - petitioning culture. The desire to maintain a Protestant majority in the North and to protect Protestant influence drove the UWUC to generate unprecedented public support and involvement from women. Religious and political differences between Unionist-Protestant and Nationalist-Catholic communities also affected the IWFL and WSPU's campaign for women's rights during a time of significant political upheaval as a result of the Home Rule Bill. It generated unease between these organisations and with the suffrage movement in the North, which otherwise might have come together on a more united front.

This thesis has successfully tracked patterns of development of petitioning culture in Irish women's political organisations. The role of

[938] *Belfast Newsletter*, 23 Nov. 1912, p. 7.
[939] Holmes, 'Presbyterian Religion, Historiography, and Ulster Scots Identity', p. 618.

petitioning has been the subject of a growing body of work, which has proven the importance of this practice through various historical contexts. However, the role of petitioning has been neglected in the context of Irish history and Irish women's history more specifically. This thesis has demonstrated the centrality of petitioning to many women's organisations of the nineteenth century and has shown that a significant accomplishment of petitioning as a campaign method, was its ability to connect the disenfranchised with popular politics and political processes. Petitioning 'encouraged participatory politics, serving as both an end and a means for creating communities of interest or concern.'[940] It served a vital purpose by giving a voice to the voiceless in this period of steadily growing democracy and became a valuable political tool for disenfranchised women, whose political worlds expanded by the end of the nineteenth century after obtaining voting rights on a local level. This thesis has also shown how women's approaches to petitioning changed over the course of the period. As seen with the DWTA, it became clear that petitioning was not always pursued consistently and was utilised strategically rather than on a regular basis. The DWSA, for example, petitioned on a year-by-year basis until it became the IWSLGA, which petitioned less following the introduction of the 1898 Local Government Act. The organisation chose to focus more so on introducing women into local politics and producing literature to help with that. This shows that petitioning was part of a broader range of tactics.

Examining these organisations, through petitioning, has also shown how women's organisations changed and developed across this period. Middle-class pressure groups, such as the LNA, DWSA and DWTA, deployed classic models of campaign methods, including letter writing, drawing-room meetings and petitioning. These organisations also had a notable male membership with men often chairing meetings. This began to change in the 1890s, with more women

[940] Huzzey and Miller, 'Petitions, Parliament and Political Culture', p. 163.

taking a leading role in the IWSLGA and women began to overtake their male counterparts in sitting as the chair during meetings. The IWFL also changed women's approach towards political protests, by deploying more radical methods, such as stoning government buildings. Women also began to deploy petitioning in more innovative and diverse ways, such as the suffrage movement using petitions to create a spectacle and Unionist women refusing to recognise the authority of Parliament by organising petitions to the Queen and signing the Women's Declaration. Clearly, women's organisations between 1870-1918 developed to become more assertive and independent.

To contribute to studies on petitioning in Ireland, this thesis further examined changes in Irish women's petitioning culture. Chapter 3 analysed debates surrounding the usefulness of petitioning by suffrage activists of the twentieth century. These debates revealed changing attitudes towards petitioning as some suffragettes, such as Hannah Sheehy Skeffington, believed constitutionalist methods were no longer viable. This, however, further complicated the definition of petitioning itself, as petitions did not have to be constitutional and could in fact be utilised as part of militant displays of protest. This demonstrated that petitioning was not always a peaceful form of agitation and could be used for more forceful means. Petitioning was effective in that it did not always follow a strict rulebook and, as Henry Miller suggests, suffragettes could recast petitioning 'in ways that allowed them to legitimize protest in the heart of the political system'.[941] This means that petitions were diverse campaign tools which could be adapted to a wide range of political contexts. Examining these debates, alongside the role of petitioning, also proved that constitutionalism and militancy as concepts were interchangeable and not absolute opposites. The examination of newspaper articles and committee meeting minutes greatly aided in the tracking of changing characteristics of

[941] Miller, 'Practice of Petitioning', p. 9.

petitioning in Ireland. This is vital to expanding our understanding of both Irish women and Irish political cultures, particularly as petitioning played an important role for many disenfranchised groups.

This thesis has contributed to current literature on Irish and British history by providing a comparative perspective with events in Britain. Each chapter addresses the differences and similarities between Irish organisations and their British counterparts. The findings explored in this thesis have suggested that there were indeed some differences that meant that the Irish suffrage campaign was different to England. Organisations such as DWSA/IWSLGA fell behind their counterparts in Britain when it came to the number of members, subscribers and donations they received. As examined in chapter 2, Dublin-based organisations tended to lag behind their English counterparts due to a lack of resources. British organisations such as the NUWSS or branches of the NUWSS simply had a higher number of wealthy members who could donate larger sums of money. Though it could be reasonably suggested that perhaps the political climate of nineteenth-century Ireland simply was not open to accepting parliamentary franchise. Lending further evidence to this, when the DWSA changed its name to the IWSLGA and focused their campaign on practical means of promoting women in local government, their membership and donations grew.

Irish and British organisations would often work together as seen in chapter 2 and this chapter identified a relationship between the DWSA and NSWS. Relationships between British and Irish women appeared to be more complicated in chapters 4 and 5. Relationships between the Irish and British women's temperance associations grew distant, as Irish women wished to unite and represent themselves under the IWTU. As aforementioned, the IWFL had a complicated relationship with the WSPU due to their differences on Home Rule. This relationship offers wider reflections on the effects of colonialism as Margaret Ward notes that political power was located 'within the British state, and the

British feminist movement enjoyed superior resources, the Irish movement was at a disadvantage.'[942] While Ireland was part of the Union with Britain, it did not share in its economical and industrial developments and did not share the same social characteristics, as discussed with regard to differences in religion and class. The IWFL was in a complicated position as it attempted to campaign with Nationalist sympathies while also maintaining the delicate relations they shared with suffrage activists in the United Kingdom and the sensitive political situation in Northern Ireland.

This thesis analysed a wide majority of active women's organisations in this period and also covered a multitude of themes and perspectives. However, some organisations and topics had to be omitted as they did not fit into the remit of this thesis. It is necessary to address these for the sake of future research. In order to contribute to combined studies of Irish and British history, it would be imperative to conduct a comparative examination of party activism between Irish women's organisations and British Liberal women. Liberal women in England 'saw the Home Rule crisis as something which had roused women in particular to political action.'[943] The Women's Liberal Association, founded in 1887, attracted up to 16,500 members and 63 branches in 1887 to 82,000 and 448 branches in 1895.[944] It is unknown whether there were any branches set up in Ireland but the British branches did have Irish members such as Countess Alice Kearney whose family originated in Mayo in Ireland.[945] This organisation should be examined through one member in particular, Amy Mander, who was a committee member from Wolverhampton. Mander was very much invested in the Irish question, and corresponded with Irish politicians such as John Dillon of the Irish National Land League and Michael Davitt, both of whom played

[942] Ward, 'Conflicting Interests', p. 127.
[943] Luddy, 'Women and Politics', p. 105.
[944] Eugenio F. Biagini, *British Democracy and Irish Nationalism, 1876-1906* (Cambridge, 2009), p. 93.
[945] *Cork Examiner*, 3 Oct. 1892, p. 3.

notable roles during the Land War. Mander also corresponded with Dillon's cousin, Anne Deane, who was president of the LLL. Their relationship shows that relations between Irish women and Liberal women continued to develop even after the years of the land war. Amy Mander's papers can be found in The National Library of Ireland and they contain a significant amount of source material on her involvement in politics in Ireland and in the Women's Liberal Association. This lies beyond the scope of this thesis's particular investigation but has the opportunity to reveal additional information on her relationship with Irish politicians and her involvement in politics, which would complement this thesis.

By comparing the use of a particular tactic, petitioning, this thesis underscored the gulf in which groups and organisations followed certain patterns and shared personnel. Petitioning played a role in Daniel O'Connell's campaigns for Catholic Emancipation and the Repeal of the Acts of Union between Great Britain and Ireland in the early nineteenth century.[946] This had once been a common Catholic tactic, with women also involved in the Repeal movement, yet Catholic women were absent from the campaigns of the women's organisations examined in this thesis. Therefore, in order to expand on Catholic women's participation in politics, it is necessary to examine women's contributions to O'Connell's Repeal movement of the 1830s, as well as the Ladies' Committee of the IRB in the 1860s and the LLL later in the 1880s. Members of the LLL were related to tenant farmers, to league members and members of previous political movements such as the IRB. There is still more work to be done on the social composition of this movement, by dissecting newspaper articles and letters written by the members themselves. This will provide a clearer understanding on how many members were working class versus middle and upper class. It can also identify if this was a largely working-class movement, even if the central

[946] Whyte, 'Daniel O'Connell and the Repeal Party', p. 314

committee was middle-class with an upper-class Protestant leadership through Fanny and Anna Parnell. The findings from this study would offer significant contributions to studies on nineteenth-century Irish women's politicisation, considering the majority of these women were middle-class Protestants.

Examining Catholic women's organisations would offer a very valuable comparative perspective by addressing the differences and similarities they shared and what caused the divides between them. It would also be beneficial to investigate whether LLL members ever sent private petitions to local authorities or if they supported suffrage. There are many more branches to discover and analyse, which can be done through intensive research in the newspaper archives and in the Ladies' Land League papers in the Land League collection in the National Library of Ireland.

Another finding from this thesis is the value of further analysing the organisational history of the Women's Declaration. The paper history of this petition revealed how signature sheets were divided into folders with information regarding constituencies, polling districts and, most importantly, the agents for the area. Many of these agents were women, showing how they too played a role in organising the huge undertaking of the Women's Declaration. As Pamela McKane and this thesis have argued, 'Ulster Unionism spoke to many women who felt strongly enough about the unionist cause to publicly declare their loyalty to the British Crown, their Protestant identity, and sense of British Ulster identity.'[947] The Women's Declaration offered a vehicle through which these women could become politicised and more work should be done on their role. Further research should be done on the identity and social composition of these agents by uncovering whether they were mostly men or women, were they involved in other organisations and which class did they belonged to. Not only

[947] McKane, '"No idle sightseers"', p. 345.

does this allow for further examination of the role of women in Ulster Day but also the political history of the document itself. Datasets could be drawn from the signatures in the petition, allowing for the arrangement of valuable information on the signatories and organisers. More work could also be done on uncovering the identity of any Catholics who signed the Declaration, which would reveal how complicated the issue of Home Rule was among Catholics and Protestants in Ulster.

In order to expand further on our understanding of Irish women's petitioning, it would be valuable look beyond the attainment of parliamentary franchise in 1918 and to look at what Rosemary Cullen Owen's has called 'the quest for equal citizenship.'[948] Further research is required on whether petitioning became a spent force after 1918. Richard Huzzey and Henry Miller have found that the legacy of petitioning likely continued into the twentieth century, as while elections were important, they 'merely punctuated the everyday politics of representation for voters and non-voters' which was 'pursued through petitions to other authorities' and other campaign methods.[949] While some women were granted the right to vote in 1918, many were still disenfranchised and feminist activists expanded their campaign to demand equal pay for work, equal marriage laws and to eliminate all barriers that would impede women's progress.[950] Women would continue to campaign for their rights even after the long fought battle of parliamentary franchise had been won.

A future project on this could examine the continued work of the IWFL and seek out what petitions were submitted in the years following on issues such as the 1927 Juries Bill, which sought to exclude women from jury duty, or the 1934 Criminal Amendment Act which defined the age of consent as 13 years old

[948] Owens, *A social History of Women in Ireland,* p. 251.
[949] Huzzey and Miller, 'Petitions, Parliament and Political Culture', p. 163
[950] As cited in Owens, *A social History of Women in Ireland*, p. 252.

as well as banning contraceptives. The fight against legislation such as these repeats some of the themes explored in this thesis, concerning the exclusion of women from their rights to their civic and local duties and the continued control of women's bodily autonomy. An examination of this would be the logical progression to contribute to current literature on petitioning by addressing whether women continued to petition into the 1920s and 30s and if so, what were they petitioning against and were they more successful than their earlier feminist counterparts? This would also open the way for the examination of more modern petitioning patterns into the latter half of the twentieth century. This, as well as the themes studied in this thesis, also offer wider reflections on modern day women's rights campaigns. Even more recently, debates around women's rights and bodily autonomy continued to be debated in Ireland with the Repeal the 8th movement, which saw through the legalisation of abortion in June 2018 through methods such as social mobilisation.[951] That is why it is vital to look to the past to understand how women's rights campaigns originated, how they progressed and contributed to current campaigns.

[951] Ruth Coppinger, 'Young People Must Further Mobilise to Repeal the Eight Ahead of Oireachtas Committee Decision', in [http://www.universitytimes.ie/2017/09/young-people-must-further-mobilise-to-repeal-the-eighth-ahead-of-oireachtas-committee-decision/] [Last Accessed, 23 January 2019]; Kitty Holland, Ireland's abortion referendum: 'It's painful and it's personal', in [https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/may/13/ireland-abortion-referendum-25-may-repeal-campaign-women] [Last Accessed, 10 September 2020].

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Munster Express

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